JESUS OF NAZARETH

BY

LYMAN ABBOTT

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THE HOLY LAND.

JESUS OF NAZARETH:

HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS;

FOUNDED ON THE FOUR GOSPELS,

AND ILLUSTRATED BY REFERENCE TO THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF HIS TIMES.

BY LYMAN ABBOTT.

WITH DESIGNS BY DORÉ, DE LAROCHE, FENN, AND OTHERS.

"COME AND SEE."

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HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
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1869.

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PREFACE.

NO one can hope to write a complete biography of Jesus of Nazareth, whose life is the pattern, whose death is the sacrifice, and whose resurrection is the hope for all humanity. No one can aspire to do more than illustrate some phases of his incomparable life and character. It is proper, therefore, briefly to state the specific object of this Life of Christ.

It seems to have been no part of the divine purpose to give in the Gospels a connected Life of Jesus. The Bible is a book of original materials, not of constructed systems. The evangelists, therefore, have given us, not biographies, but biographical memorabilia. They have not undertaken to trace the history of Christ from the cradle to the grave, but to collect and preserve the various incidents and teachings in his ministry. Matthew and Mark accompany him only through Galilee. Luke gives a glimpse of his life in Perea. John alone recounts his experience and reception in Judea. Only the history of the Passion Week is recorded by them all.

Not one of them has followed a chronological order.

Not one affords us a single date. The years of Christ's birth and his crucifixion are alike involved in uncertainty.

My first purpose, then, has been to gather up these sin-

gle threads and weave them into a connected narrative; to learn, if possible, the course of his earthly life, the order of his ministry, the gradual unfolding of his divine purposes, and the secret causes which so operated on the public mind as to lead the people to offer him a crown in Galilee and award him the cross at Jerusalem. This task has been less simple than it might seem. Among the so-called harmonists there is no harmony. In such a work the uncertain guidance of surmise has been of necessity sometimes accepted, where there were no clear indications in the original accounts to determine the chronological order.

Neither have the evangelists illustrated the events they recount by any detailed explanation of the manners and customs of their age. For the most part they have assumed that their readers possess the knowledge so familiar not only to them, but to their contemporaries. This life of the past, which has faded from sight before the brighter light of Christian civilization, I have endeavored, in these pages, to restore by borrowing the pen of history to transport the reader into the atmosphere of the first century. I have thus sought to give to the life and teachings of Christ that significance which is afforded by a knowledge of his times and circumstances; to present the Life of Christ in its appropriate setting.

Many systems of so-called Christianity have appeared in the world, differing greatly from each other, and from that which is to be deduced from the words and doings of Jesus. It is well sometimes to go back to the Fountain-head, to trace this affluent stream of Christian civilization to its Source, to study, in the life and teachings of Jesus, the Christianity of Christ.

With the prosecution of this general purpose no considerations have been permitted to interfere.

Believing the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, it has been enough for my purpose to assume that the Gospels are authentic narratives. The reader will therefore find in these pages no discussion concerning the authority of the Scriptures, or the authenticity of particular passages. This belongs to the critic, not to the historian.

Believing that God is immanent in nature and in life, I hold that Christian faith in the Christian miracles is the truest rationalism. But it is the province of the philosopher, not of the historian, to discuss this question. To the philosopher, therefore, I have remitted it, writing this record of Christ's life in the same faith in a present helpful God in which the inspired records were written which constitute my authorities.

Believing Jesus to be the Incarnate Son of God, I have not written to advocate that article of the Christian's faith. This is not a theological treatise under guise of an historical monograph. It contains no discussions of even fundamental doctrines. To the skepticism which still inquires incredulously, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" there is no better answer than that of Philip, "Come and see."

The language of imagination has been sometimes employed, but only in the narration of well-authenticated facts. The minutest reference to dress, manners, customs, and scenery are founded upon a careful and conscientious study of reliable authorities. It would not probably add to the real value of the book to encumber its pages with references to them, but the reader will find in an Appendix a list of the more important English works consulted. If he is desirous to examine any doubtful point, he has thus, at least, a clew to his investigations. The foot-notes are confined mainly to Scripture references. These are not al-

ways cited as authorities. They are often only referred to as illustrations of the statements in the text.

In a few cases notes are added referring to critical investigations, the results of which only are indicated in the body of the work.

Finally, I have not interwoven in this narrative of Christ's life any eulogy of his teachings or his character. It is but a poor device, that of ancient art, which puts a halo round His head that it may designate Him. Reverencing Jesus as the only-begotten Son of God, accepting him as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, in whom alone is the remission of sins, and loving him with daily-increasing love as my Savior and my Lord, I have sought simply to tell the story of his life, believing that his character is its own best evidence of his divinity, his life its own highest eulogy. The pen which I took up with enthusiasm I lay down with regret. Whatever reception the Christian public may accord to this fruit of my studies, I shall be ever grateful for the impulse which led me to them, for in those studies themselves I have found my highest and best reward.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

New England Church,
New York City, January 1, 1869.

CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE.

In the dates which are placed at the head of these pages I have assumed that Jesus was born A.D. 1. The year of his birth is, however, uncertain, though modern scholars think it probable that he was really born four years before this date. (See Andrews's Life of Our Lord, p. 1; Smith's New Testament History, p. 194, 358.) I have thought it, however, better to adopt the popular chronology than to confuse the reader by apparent incongruities between the statements of Jesus's age as afforded by the text and by the Gospels and the chronological headings, which, if they followed later scholarship, would require constant explanation. The reader will understand, therefore, that A.D. in the page headings refers him back, not to the beginning of the present era, but to the real date of Jesus's birth, whatever that may be, and thus that these dates indicate *his* age rather than that of the Christian era. I have usually, though not uniformly, followed the chronology of Andrews, whose careful and painstaking studies in this department leave very little to be added or altered.

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MAP OF THE HOLY LAND.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY LAND.

UPON the western borders of the Mediterranean Sea there lies a country whose moral importance is in striking contrast with its territorial insignificance. This country, in area not so large as Massachusetts,* which in shape it somewhat resembles, has been the scene of a drama incomparably more influential upon the destinies of mankind than any other in history. The stage is scarcely less remarkable than are the scenes which have been enacted on it. The most extraordinary man of all time had his birth, and passed his life in the most extraordinary of all lands. A few words, therefore, concerning the geographical features of Palestine, and the character and history of its people, form in some sense a prelude to the life of him who has given it its most commonly-accepted title of the Holy Land.

Situated at the junction of three great continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa, Palestine partakes of the characteristic features of the three, and possesses in a diminutive form all their peculiarities. Here, in Southern Judea, is the desert of Africa making its incursion from the peninsula below. Here, bordering the Mediterranean, are plains that rival in fertility those of our own great Western prairies. Here, in the ele-

* Palestine is in length 180 miles, in average breadth 65.—Kitto's Bib. Cyc., art. *Palestine.*

vated mountain region of Central Palestine, is repeated the hill country which constitutes the characteristic feature of Southern Scotland. Here, in Northern Galilee, are mountains whose rugged steeps remind of the White Mountains and the Alps. Here, embosomed in their midst, are lakes unsurpassed for their quiet beauty. Here, in the Jordan, is a mountain stream whose tumultuous torrent finds no equal in any river of its size and length in the world. Here Mount Hermon lifts its head, wrapped in perpetual snow, three thousand feet above our own Mount Washington. Here the waters of the Dead Sea lie in a basin scooped out of the solid rock, nearly, if not quite as far below the level of the ocean as are the deepest mines of Cornwall. And here, almost in sight of its holy city, beat the waves of the Great Sea upon one hundred and fifty miles of rocky coast; so that in this one province, smaller than Massachusetts or Vermont, are mingled the ocean, the mountain, the valley, the river, the lake, the desert, and the plain.

Its varieties of climate and production equal those of its physical features, and are in part produced by them. The temperate and the tropic zones overlap each other in Palestine. With a general climate corresponding to that of Northern Florida, it contains mountains whose heads are never free from snow, and valleys that rarely, if ever, witness it, except from afar. Tropical fruits and Northern cereals grow almost side by side. The fig-tree and the grape-vine produce their fruits in perfection on the sunny hill-sides of Judea. The cedars clothe the rocky sides of Lebanon. The apple, the pear, the plum, the quince, grow near neighbors with the date, the pomegranate, the banana, and the almond. The oak, the maple, and the evergreens of our Northern States make here acquaintance with the sycamore, the fig, the olive, residents of Asiatic climes. In a single day you may travel from the climate and productions of the Gulf States to such as characterize New England. In short, in this land, from which issue influences for the redemption of all people, are

united in a singular conjunction the characteristic features and productions of all countries.

This land, though contiguous to three continents, and lying in close proximity to the great nationalities of the past—the Assyrian upon the east, the Egyptian on the southwest, and the Greek and Roman on the north and west—was nevertheless, by its singular conformation, shut out from them by barriers which, until after the Christian era, were nearly impassable. The valley of the Jordan on the west, the Mediterranean on the east, the desert on the south, and the mountain range of Lebanon and anti-Lebanon on the north, formed a better protection than the famous wall of the Celestial Empire. Its peculiar location thus fitted it to be the centre, as historically it has been, of the world's civilization, while its peculiar character adapted it to be a home of a peculiar people, kept by the nature of their country, no less than by that of their institutions, separate from the rest of mankind.

By its physical features Palestine is divided into three long and narrow sections, parallel to each other, and nearly parallel to the coast—the valley of the Jordan, with the Dead Sea; the hill country of Central Palestine; and the rich and fertile lowlands which border the Mediterranean.

The Jordan, rising among the mountains of Galilee, flowing in a long and rocky gorge, rapidly descending southward, and issuing in the Dead Sea, one hundred and fifty miles from its source and three thousand feet* below the surface of its upper waters, forms a valley which, in its geographical and geological features, is without a parallel in the world. Buried between mountain ranges, effectually shielded from the Mediterranean breezes, this valley possesses a climate whose intolerable heats are without alleviation, a vegetation which, luxuriant in spring, is burnt and withered in summer by a cloudless sun, and a people who are to this day prone to those vices of the tropical climates which brought destruction upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

* Smith's Bib. Dict., vol. ii., 674 *a*.

West of this valley the land rises by an ascent, in the south even precipitous, to an elevated range of hills from fifteen to eighteen hundred feet in height. In Judea this hill-country, heated by breezes from the southern desert, possesses a climate and productions of an almost tropical character. Rounded hills of moderate height, now barren, but once covered with terraced vineyards; now desolate, but once crowned with villages, are the characteristic features of the scenery. For a few weeks of spring water-torrents fill the ravines, and flowers of the most brilliant hue, daisies, anemones, wild tulips, poppies, clothe the land with dress of scarlet. But the fierce rays of an intolerable sun and the scorching sirocco of the desert soon blight and wither them. "The wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." Proceeding northward, the scenery becomes more varied, the mountains more marked, the plains more considerable, the soil better. Wells and springs increase in number, the heat of the desert is escaped or counteracted by breezes from the northern ranges of snow-clad mountains, the shrubs of Southern Judea are supplanted by trees of larger growth and by more enduring vegetation, until at length, in Galilee, we reach a region whose springs and mountain streams, never dry, supply Lakes Merom and Tiberias, the reservoirs of Palestine; whose romantic mountains reach their consummation in the snow-capped peaks of Lebanon and anti-Lebanon, and whose verdure-clad hills and vales strongly contrast with the relatively barren hills of Jewry.

Upon the west this plateau descends by a slope, far more gradual than on the east, to the plains of Sharon, Acre, and Esdraelon. These lowlands constitute the most fertile part of Palestine. Their average width is fifteen or sixteen miles. The climate is mild, the soil rich. Orange-trees are laden with fruits and flowers in January, and, when neither oppression nor foreign invasion desolate the land, these plains are covered with the richest and most luxuriant vegetation. It was for the possession of these plains that the ancient Canaan-

FLOWERS OF THE HOLY LAND.

ites contended after they were driven from the hill-country, and from which, the Book of Judges naïvely tells us, "The Lord could not drive them out, because they had chariots of iron."*

Imagine, then, the State of Vermont, its western shore bounded by the Atlantic Ocean instead of by Lake Champlain; the Connecticut Valley, its eastern boundary, a deep and almost impassable ravine cleft by some great convulsion in the solid rocks; the northern peaks of its Green-Mountain range overtopping Mount Washington; its southern hills rounded like those of Western Connecticut; its northern climate and productions not widely different from those of the Middle States; its southern counties akin in both respects to the Gulf States, and the reader will have a tolerably accurate picture of that land which, the birthplace and home of Jesus Christ, is the cradle of Christianity.†

* Judges i., 19.

† See Frontispiece. In this picture the artist has grouped the more characteristic features of the Holy Land in one view. In the foreground is a glimpse of the Dead Sea and the tropical vegetation of Southern Palestine. Beyond, and in the centre of the picture, rises Mount Tabor. To the right are to be seen the waters of the Sea of Tiberias, while in the distance rise the snow-clad heights of the Lebanon and Mount Hermon. To combine in one view these varied aspects, and to preserve with accuracy the topography of the country, was impossible, and has not been attempted. But the characteristic features of the land, excepting the plains and the sea-shore, have been caught and preserved by the pencil.

CHAPTER II.

THE JEWISH COMMONWEALTH.

THE curtain rises on the Jewish drama, disclosing a nation of slaves suffering under the most intolerable bondage of an Egyptian despotism. They are delivered by God through the hand of Moses. They cross the Red Sea near its northern terminus, pass down its eastern shore, and at length assemble on an extended plain in the midst of a wild and grand rocky fastness, well fitted to be the cradle of a free people,* that they may there receive from the hand of God the gift of national life and liberty. Here Moses recounts to the people their deliverance; he nominates Jehovah to be their king; he declares that God will be their God if they will be His people. In the most solemn manner the question is submitted to their suffrage. With acclamation they accept Jehovah as their civil ruler.† Thus begins their national history.

Men grow into freedom. A race long enslaved is seldom fitted for liberty with less than an education which outlasts the first generation. In accordance with this almost universal law of history, the Hebrew people wait till the generation of slaves is dead before their children are brought to the land of their fathers—the land which God had destined for them. But this forty years is not misspent. During that time a constitution and system of laws is perfected and taught to them which underlies not only all their subsequent

* The picture of Mount Sinai which accompanies this chapter is from drawings and photographs taken at the place. The edge of Mount Sinai proper is seen upon the left. The plain which occupies the centre is supposed to be the location of the Israelites' encampment. For a description of it, see Robinson's Researches, vol. i., § iii., p. 140, and Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, p. 42, 43.

† Exod. xix., 1–9.

MOUNT SINAI.

history, but in some measure the political history of the world. For the Jewish Constitution was not perfectly formed and fully propounded from Mount Sinai. It was a growth rather than a fabric. Its principles are scattered through the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They have sometimes to be deduced from passages which imply rather than directly teach them. But, thus gathered and grouped together, they are seen to contain not only a system of laws admirably adapted to the times and the people, but also those political principles which underlie free institutions for all times and for all peoples.

Religion is the foundation of the state. This truth, which the failures of the Grecian and Roman republics have taught the world, Moses recognized in the very inception of the Jewish nation. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt,"* is the preamble to their Constitution. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"† is the first provision of their fundamental law. Their obedience is enforced, too, not by considerations of self-interest or of patriotism, but by religious obligations. "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," * * * for it "is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."‡ "Ye shall not therefore oppress one another, * * * for I am the Lord your God." "The land shall not be sold forever; for the land is mine."§ Such is the constant language of the Mosaic statutes. This was coupled with precepts of religion and morality confessedly of the highest and purest character—such that they have long outlived the tables of stone on which a summary of them was engraven. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,"‖ was declared by Christ to be an epitome of the moral code which Moses prescribed. He not only forbade theft,¶ adultery,** murder,†† assault,‡‡

* Exod. xx., 2. † Ibid., xx., 3. ‡ Ibid., xx., 8, 10. § Lev. xxv, 17, 23.
‖ Deut. x., 12; xi., 1, 22; xix., 9; xxx., 6; Mark xii., 30; Luke x., 27.
¶ Exod. xx., 15. ** Ibid., v. 14. †† Ibid., v., 13.
‡‡ Exod. xxi, 14–27.

crimes either openly permitted or practically connived at by other and later systems; he provided for the protection of the poor and the outcast. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."* "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child."† "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant; * * * at his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor."‡ "Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger."§ Such precepts as these, scattered through the statutes, prove that Moses remembered, what the Church and the State have ever been prone to forget, that humanity is a part of religion, and that the rights of the poorest peasant are as sacred before a just law as those of the noble or the king.

Three thousand years later the framers of our Declaration of Independence declared the equality and liberty of the people to be self-evident truths. These American axioms Moses recognized and incorporated in the Hebraic Constitution. The assertion that all men are created equal would have been received only with derision by the nations of the earth. Every people were divided into classes by gulfs as broad as that which separates Dives and Lazarus, such that no man could pass. Moses forbade all caste and class distinctions: "Thou shalt not respect persons."‖ "Ye shall have one manner of law as well for the stranger as for one of your own country."¶ "Thou shalt not * * * honor the person of the mighty."** Such were his repeated commands. He recognized the unity of the people, and addressed them in the name of their God as *one*. "I am the Lord *thy* God, which brought *thee* out of the land of Egypt."†† And he declared that Jehovah himself regarded not rank, nor wealth, nor birth. "For the Lord your God * * * * regardeth not

* Exod. xxii., 21. † Ibid., xxii., 22. ‡ Deut. xxiv., 14.
§ Lev. xix., 10. ‖ Deut. i., 17; xvi., 19.
¶ Lev. xxiv., 22. ** Lev. xix., 15. †† Exod. xx., 2.

persons, nor taketh reward."* Nothing analogous to an hereditary aristocracy existed under his administration; and although a priestly order was established, it was, as we shall presently see, deprived of all priestly power, and it was emphatically declared that the whole people were a nation of priests unto God,† whose ear was equally open to the prayers of all.

No less radical would have been the assertion that governments instituted among men derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

All Oriental nations were absolute despotisms. The people were the slaves of irresponsible autocrats. Moses established the Hebrew commonwealth, by God's direction, as a free republic, upon universal, or at least popular suffrage. He submitted all questions to the action of the people. All officers were elected by their voice. The Constitution which he proposed was received and ratified by their vote. And even God himself was accepted as their supreme civil ruler by the independent voice of the great assembly.‡

But, while thus all questions were submitted to the voice of the people, the Hebrew commonwealth was not a pure democracy. Six hundred years later, in Sparta, all public questions were submitted to the people in mass meeting.

* Deut. x., 17. † Exod. xix., 6.

‡ When the people first reached Mount Sinai, they were assembled by Moses, and God said to them, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." "And Moses came and called for all the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.'"—Exod. xix., 5, 7, 8. When, thereupon, their Constitution, the ten commandments, was propounded, this again was submitted to them for ratification: "And Moses came and told all the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, 'All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.'"—Exod. xxiv., 3. And although the account in Numbers, chap. xi., 16, 24, uninterpreted, might be thought to indicate that the officers were chosen by Moses, he himself bears testimony that the people elected their own officers, and he merely inducted them into office.—Deut. i., 13–18.

The attempt proved an utter failure. In a convocation so large deliberation was not possible; debate, therefore, was not allowed. Passion, prejudice, and ignorance were the enactors of the laws. Moses established the first representative government on earth. He constituted two representative assemblies.

The first is known as the Great Congregation. It was the Jewish House of Representatives. It reflected the popular will. It was the Great Congregation that, on the report of the twelve spies, voted not to attempt the subjugation of Canaan.* It was before the Great Congregation that Joshua was inducted into office.† It was the Great Congregation that ratified the selection of Saul as king.‡ When Solomon wished to establish the ark of the Lord at Jerusalem, it was to the Great Congregation that he submitted the proposition, and by them it was ratified and carried into effect.§

The other body consisted of seventy men selected from the different tribes, Moses's chief counselors.‖ This body made treaties,¶ tried capital offenses, and enforced the execution of the laws.** It was Cabinet, Senate, and Supreme Court.

Although Moses thus provided popular government, assured by prophetic vision that the popular mind would not long be able to resist the dazzling enticements of royalty, he provided a careful system of checks and restraints in case a monarchy should be established. These are recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy.†† No foreigner should receive the imperial crown. The king should establish no cavalry. He should lay no heavy taxation to enrich himself and his court. He should not establish a harem. And he should be himself subject to the laws of the realm. These he should make his constant study. In brief, Moses so guard-

* Numb. xiv., 1–5, 10.
† Numb. xxvii., 18–23.
‡ 1 Chron. xiii., 1–8.
§ 1 Kings viii., 1–5.
‖ Numb. xi., 16, 17.
¶ In the singular story of the inhabitants of Gibeon, the congregation were dissatisfied with the treaty, but sustained it because made by the Senate.—Josh. ix., 18–21.
** Jer. xxvi., 10–16.
†† Deut. xvii., 14–20.

ed the royal power and prerogatives that, in the later and corrupt period of its history, so profligate a despot as Ahab was able to accomplish so simple an act of despotism as the unjust absorption of a poor peasant's estate only by bribing the regularly constituted judges of the land.*

Prior to Moses's day, law was, in general, little more than the will of a single despot. He established a carefully constructed system of legislation. The laws which he propounded were equally binding on the highest and the lowest —the chief magistrate and the meanest subject—the priest and the people. Some of these laws, tested by the demands of modern society, have been thought cruel, others frivolous. But if the value of a law is to be measured by its adaptation to the people and the times, they are obnoxious to neither charge. He permitted slavery, which it would have been in vain to forbid. But he placed it under such restrictions that at the time of Christ it had utterly disappeared. He allowed divorce and polygamy. But he so provided for the protection of woman, that in this semi-barbaric people her condition was immeasurably above what it ever was in the highest civilization of Greece or Rome. He affixed penalties which, for the nineteenth century, would be unnecessarily severe. But, at a time when families were always held responsible for the act of their head, he forbade attainder;† and in an age and a nation without jails or penitentiaries, and when, therefore, imprisonment for crime was impracticable, he provided capital punishment for but twelve crimes,‡ while as late as A.D. 1600 two hundred and sixty-three were punished with death in England. At the same time he carefully guarded human life, liberty, and property;§ he made special provisions for the detection of secret crime;‖ he established cities of refuge, in which the perpetrator of an accidental homicide might escape from the natural but unjust

* 1 Kings xxi., 1–16.

† Deut. xxiv., 16.

‡ See a list of them in Smith's Bible Dict., art. Laws of Moses.

§ See Exod. xx., 13; Deut. xxii., 8; Exod. xxii., 1–14; Deut. xxiv., 7; and ante, p. 29 and 30, and notes.

‖ Deut. xxi., 1–9.

revenge of the next of kin;* he compelled speedy payment of wages to the day-laborer;† he provided public charities for the stranger and the poor.‡

These provisions have absolutely no parallel in any ancient legislation.

Laws are useless forms without measures for their enforcement. Moses arranged a judiciary§ who were elected by the people themselves,‖ but, apparently holding their office for life, were not subject to popular passion and caprice; and he framed a system of courts whose nature, but dimly shadowed forth in the records which have come down to us, seem to indicate a carefully arranged system of inferior and appellate courts, rising from a magistrate answering to our justice of the peace, whose jurisdiction was purely local, to a Council of Seventy, which answered to our Supreme Court of the United States.¶

How to preserve local independence, and yet secure national unity and strength, has been a perplexing political problem in all ages. At an era when governments were either centralized despotisms, like those of Persia and Egypt, or disintegrated and perpetually warring tribes, like those of the Canaanitish clans—like those maintained to the present day among the Bedouin Arabs and the remnant of North American Indians, Moses gave to this people a government whose motto might well have been *E Pluribus Unum.* He recognized the tribal divisions already introduced;** he provided for their local organization. By his direction independent territory was allotted to them, with well-marked bounds.†† Their right to elect their own local officers, legislative, executive, and judicial, was recognized and maintained. At the same time, he merged them in one nation; he instructed them in the truth that their God was one; he provided one worship, ritual, and tabernacle. Later was established one

* Numb. xxxv., 9–28; Deut. iv., 41–43. † Deut. xxiv., 15.
‡ Lev. xix., 9, 10; Deut. xxiv., 19–22; xxiii., 24, 25; xiv., 27–29.
§ Exod. xviii. ‖ Deut. i., 13. ¶ Exod. xviii., 21–25; Numb. xi., 24.
** Numb. i. †† Josh. xiii., xiv., 1–5.

capital and one national temple, whither all the people were thrice a year assembled on solemn state and religious occasions.* He scattered through them all one priesthood, bound together not less by the common ties of blood and ancestry than by those of a common order.† He provided one chief magistrate, at first a divinely appointed judge;‡ later, by the will of the people, an hereditary monarch. And he established a Senate and House of Representatives which included delegates from all the tribes, and combined them in a common representative assemblage.

Popular education is essential to the maintenance of freedom. Such provision was made for this as was possible in that age of the world. Moses required parents to instruct their children in the laws and principles of the commonwealth;§ he established a Levitical order, a part of whose duty it was to instruct the people in the law upon great state occasions,‖ and who, later, scattered through Palestine, in every town and village, taught them and their children by private catechetical instruction.¶ An order of prophets was provided, of which he was himself the first, who fulfilled the double function of the modern press and the modern pulpit. At the same time, freedom of speech, essential to a free republic, was carefully secured by the Mosaic Constitution. It is indeed true that the preaching of false gods was a capital offense, punishable with death, since, in a state whose civil ruler was Jehovah, the effort to alienate the affections of the people from him was not only irreligion, but treason.** Yet not even a false prophet could not ordinarily be punished by the state until the events which he had assumed to foretell, belying his predictions, proved him to be an impostor.††

* Exod. xxxiv., 23; and see Wines, Laws of the Anc. Hebrews, 445, 496, 517, and passages there quoted.

† Lev. iii.

‡ Numb. xxvii., 15–23.

§ Deut. vi., 7; Exod. xiii., 14, 15.

‖ Deut. xxxi., 9–13; xxxiii., 10; Nehemiah viii., 5–8.

¶ 2 Chron. xvii., 8, 9; xxx., 22; xxxv., 3.

** Exod. xxii., 20; Deut. xiii., 1–5; xviii., 9–20.

†† Deut. xviii., 21, 22. For illustration of this freedom of speech, see Jer. xxxviii.; 2 Sam. xii., 1–7; 1 Kings xxi., 17–24. The boldness of the

Whatever state has possessed a national Church has always found in its priesthood the worst foe to its freedom. Moses organized a national Church; he provided for it a movable tabernacle, out of which, later, grew the magnificent Temple on Mount Zion; he established a priestly order. The priests alone might enter the inner court of the Temple;* they alone could offer acceptable sacrifice to God;† they were the sole authorized administrators of the Temple service.‡ But the liberties of the people were carefully guarded against their possible usurpations of power. A comparison of their condition with that of the monks in the Middle Ages exhibits a remarkable and instructive contrast. In the reign of Henry VIII., it is estimated that from one tenth to one fifth of the property of Great Britain was in the hands of the Roman Catholic clergy.§ The Jewish priesthood, deprived of all share with the other tribes in the distribution of the land, were wholly dependent on the laity for their temporal support.‖ The Roman Catholic clergy framed decrees of excommunication on earth which they assured the people were ratified in the high court of heaven. All ecclesiastical censures in the Jewish Church were pronounced by the regularly constituted courts, after due trial.¶ The Roman Catholic clergy added to their authority that which the assumption of supernatural powers gave them over a superstitious people. The Jewish priests never wrought miracles. The Roman Catholic clergy were both preachers and priests. Moses provided, as we have seen, for a separate order of preachers, who, not identified with the priests by ecclesiastical ties or by a common interest, denounced unsparingly their corruptions, and constituted a perpetual check upon their priestly assumptions.** The Roman Catholic priesthood, separated from the people,

ancient prophets could only have been possible in a country where freedom of speech was a fact as well as a theory.

* Luke i., 9, 10.

† 1 Sam. xiii., 5–14.

‡ Numb. i., 47–54; xviii., 21–23.

§ Hallam's Constit. Hist. of England, vol. i., p. 76 *n.*

‖ Numb. xviii., 20, 21; Deut. x., 8, 9; xviii., 1, 2.

¶ Deut. xvii., 8–13.

** For an illustration of these denunciations, see Mal. i., 6–8.

secured their veneration less by their practical goodness than by their self-imposed austerities and penances. The Jewish clergy mingled with the people, intermarried with all the tribes, and, leading themselves a free and joyous life, were required by the law to be the leaders in all their national festivals and public amusements.*

A survey of the Hebrew commonwealth would be incomplete without noting two characteristic features of its political economy. However political power may be guarded, if the land is concentrated in the hands of a few, the many become their vassals and serfs. The peasant population of the Oriental world were then, and, indeed, are generally now, the tenants at will of a despot. Moses declared that God was the owner of the land; the people were his tenants. At the same time, he provided that every man should be a landowner, and every family according to its number.† And lest, in the future ages, by that process which destroyed the political life of the Southern States, and threatens to-day the integrity of Great Britain, the land should be concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy aristocrats, he provided that at the end of every half century the heirs might redeem the estate which their fathers had sold.‡

The industry of a nation is its wealth, and in its industry lies its real life and power. Agriculture was in this age accounted the fitting pursuit only of slaves, or of women, who were esteemed little better. Commerce was thought to demean the true noble. Literature and the learned professions were utterly unknown. War constituted the only noble art; extension of territory by conquest the only recognized glory of any nation. The Hebrew commonwealth was built on different principles. Xerxes, Darius, Alexander, and Cyrus, vainly endeavoring to build up empire by the mere prowess of arms, unconscious that national greatness consists in vitality and not in extension, were, for years after, the world's recog-

* Deut. xiv., 26–27; xii., 17–19.

† Numb. xxxiii., 54.

‡ Lev. xxv., 10, 13, 23–28.

nized heroes. Moses discouraged war, provided for no standing army, depended wholly on militia service,* and in actual war on volunteers,† allowed not even the introduction of cavalry, then the chief arm of offensive warfare,‡ but, pointing the people to agriculture as that which political economy now shows us to be the basis of national wealth, gave such direction to their industries as rendered them, throughout their national career, almost wholly an agricultural people.§

To secure the perpetuity of these principles, they were not left to the imperfect guardianship of oral tradition. They were incorporated by Moses, at God's command, in sacred writings,‖ which were deposited in the ark of the covenant, in the most sacred part of the temple.¶ In a church which permitted no graven image of God, occupying its place as a manifestation of the unseen Jehovah, and containing alike the constitution of church and state, these sacred writings were guarded with the most jealous care by prophet, priest, and ruler, and—regarded to the present day by the devout Jew with a reverence like that which the Roman Catholic accords to the host—they have been preserved in substantial purity to a degree remarkable, even if it be not regarded as supernatural.

A representative government founded upon universal suffrage and sustained by the sanction of religion, the equality of all the people recognized before the law, two legislative bodies answering to our Senate and House of Representatives, a regularly organized judiciary, carefully contrived constitutional checks provided for the monarchy not yet established but foreseen, a system of laws just, humane, and equally bind-

* Num. i.; xxvi., 2–4. The local community sometimes failed to provide for the national defense, and were bitterly denounced for it.—Judges v., 23. † Deut. xx., 1–9. ‡ Deut. xvii., 16.

§ Wines, 414–17, and authors there quoted. That this was the chief attraction of Palestine to the Israelites, see Deut. i., 25; viii., 7–10. That it was held in high esteem among the people, note that Saul and David were both taken from the farm to be kings.—1 Sam. ix., 2, 3; xi., 4, 5; xvi., 11, 12. Elisha also was ordained at the plow to the prophetic office.—1 Kings xix., 19. See also Amos i., 1. ‖ Exod. xvii., 14. ¶ Deut. xxxi., 24–26.

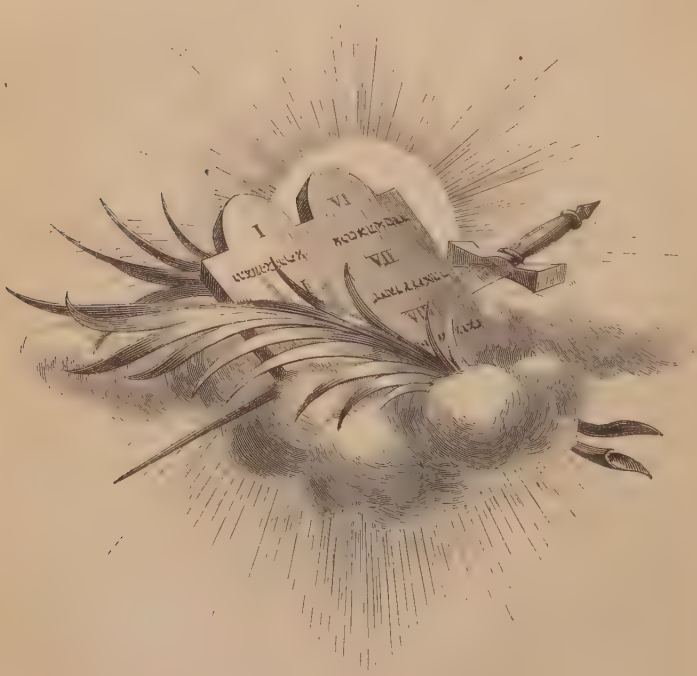
ing on all citizens, a territory divided into sovereign states, yet united in one nation, popular education provided for by the school-teacher and the prophet, freedom of speech guaranteed, yet guarded from abuse, a priesthood shorn of the powers which have ever made priestly orders dangerous to liberty, the land equally divided among all the citizens, effectually preventing a landed aristocracy, war discouraged and agriculture accepted as the basis of national industry and wealth, one God acknowledged as the Sovereign King, and, finally, these principles incorporated in a written Constitution and system of laws, carefully guarded from corruption—these are the salient features of the Hebrew commonwealth, as framed and propounded by Moses, but under the inspiration and guidance of God.*

For Moses always claimed for his legislation a divine origin. Throughout his career he insisted that he acted solely as the inspired prophet of God. He directed all the gratitude of the people to Jehovah as their deliverer and lawgiver, and this claim, generally acceded to by the people of his own time, never, indeed, denied but once,† has also been generally accepted in modern times as the most rational in-

* It will be seen from this rapid and condensed resumé of the principles of the Mosaic Legislature that I dissent altogether from that view which regards the Pentateuch as an obsolete code of laws, valuable chiefly to the archæologist or the erudite scholar. I believe, on the contrary, that, while in detail many of its provisions were especially adapted to the age and the people, and are not applicable to modern times and nationalities, its great principles are those which every where and always underlie the free state; that, while none of its precepts can be said to be legally binding on other nations, it is invaluable as a text-book of political science; and that national liberty and prosperity is assured just in the measure in which its fundamental principles are comprehended and embodied in modern legislation. The attentive reader can hardly fail to trace the remarkable parallel between these principles and those which underlie our own republic, or to observe how almost every problem of modern politics finds its solution in these laws of the first and the grandest statesmen of all times. This survey, conducted for a specific purpose, is necessarily brief—an outline, not a complete picture. He who desires to fill it up will find materials for his investigation in the Scripture references, and in the authorities referred to in the list of works consulted, which is given in the Appendix.

† Numb. xvi.

terpretation of a life so consistent, and a scheme of government at once so radical and so well adapted to the age, while this claim is sustained not less by the durability than by the inherent excellence of his work. The Jewish people, few in number, unwarlike in character, often subjugated, several times carried away captive, finally dispersed throughout the world, still preserve their nationality, and already, at the time of Christ, had witnessed the rise and fall of Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian dynasties, in appearance far more powerful, in reality far less enduring than their own.



CHAPTER III.

DEGENERACY.

NEVER was any nation more magnificently equipped with civil and religious institutions than were the ancient Hebrews. Never did any nation by a history more terrible illustrate how utterly insufficient are even divine institutions to preserve a people not wise and virtuous to maintain and administer them.

Under Joshua, the successor of Moses, the Jews concluded a successful campaign against the aborigines of the land which they were about to colonize. Never completely successful in driving them out from the plains, yet they became complete masters of the hill-country of central Palestine. Then commenced what has been well called the Middle Ages of Jewish history. Forgetting that God and that worship which constituted their national unity, when they were not united in a common conflict with a common foe they were engaged in internal conflict among themselves. "There was no king in Israel: that which every man did was right in his own eyes.* A wild revenge, such as almost obliterated the tribe of Benjamin, took the place of careful and well-considered justice;† while many crimes, like that of the abduction of Micah's priest and property, went utterly unpunished.‡ At length weary of this anarchy, and disgusted with the avarice of Samuel's sons, whom his paternal partiality had appointed as judges, the people sought relief, not by returning to the faith and order of their fathers, but by conforming to the institutions of their neighbors. They demanded a king. Against the expostulations of Samuel God

* Judg. xvii., 6; xxi., 25. † Judg. xix., xx., xxi. ‡ Judg. xviii.

granted their request,* and the nation under Solomon outrivaled its neighbors in a false glory, which, like the magnificence of autumn leaves, was only indicative of approaching death. In the reign of his successor ten tribes seceded, the nation was rent in twain, a new capital was established, a new and idolatrous worship set up in Samaria for the seceding tribes, and the history of the Jews flows thereafter in a divided stream, as that of Israel and Judah.† After two hundred years—years of increasing profligacy—the former was carried away captive by the Assyrians, and their country was repopulated by a colony from the land of their captors, a mongrel population supplanted the tribes of Hebraic origin, a hybrid religion the worship of Jehovah.‡ The two remaining tribes, retaining the national capital and temple, preserved their nationality under the name of Judah; but, changing their religion with the fluctuating opinions of their rulers, outrivaled their sister Israel in corruption,§ and were finally carried away captive under Nebuchadnezzar.‖

In the seventy years of Babylonish captivity which followed, the individuality of Judah was maintained by their distinctive worship, and their faith and hope were kept alive by the courage of such prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. The subjugation of Babylon by Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, resulted in the restoration of the Jews, the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, and the re-establishment of the Temple service under Ezra. From this event, occurring in the fifth century before Christ, date most of the characteristic features of the society of his times—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the synagogues, the re-established Sanhedrim.

A few years later, Palestine, with all Asia Minor, became tributary to Alexander the Great. His gigantic but unor-

* Monarchy, so far from being a divine institution, was established in accordance with the demands of the people in spite of God's warning.—I Sam. viii.

† 1 Kings xii.

‡ 2 Kings xvii.

§ Jer. iii., 11.

‖ 2 Kings xxv., 1–12.

CAPTIVITY.

ganized empire did not long survive him. It was divided at his death between his leading generals, and the last funeral rites were scarcely performed over his grave before a series of desolating wars for the supremacy broke out between

them. Palestine, the natural highway between Egypt, Babylon, Syria, and Greece, became the perpetual battle-ground of these contending dynasties, and changed its masters with every change in the varying fortunes of an almost ceaseless war. They gained at length, under the Maccabees, a short-lived independence, but only to fall a prey to rival factions, whose contests for political supremacy were intensified by a relentless religious animosity between Sadducee and Pharisee; until, finally, the victorious legions of Rome, under Pompey, seized upon Jerusalem, and Herod, misnamed the Great, was placed upon the throne of David by the power and decree of Rome. The last of the Jewish kings, his advent was signalized by the destruction of Judaism, both as a nationality and a religion; and by the birth of Christ, and that system of grace and truth which came through him.*

Such is the history, and such was the political condition of Palestine in the time of Christ. Of the twelve tribes, two only maintained their individuality. The rest were lost in the mongrel population which inhabited Samaria, Galilee, and Lower or Cœlo-Syria. Jehovah was no longer accepted as the King of the Jews. The throne of David was occupied by the creature of a foreign country, sustained by the arms of a foreign soldiery. The guards against monarchical usurpation, which the Mosaic Constitution had provided, were swept away. The popular right of suffrage was long since lost in the universal wreck, and with it the popular representative bodies which Moses had constituted. A military despotism was substituted for the free commonwealth. Even the form of national life did not survive the Herodian dynasty. At Herod's death, Palestine, while Christ was still an infant, was divided into petty provinces, and placed under the control of Roman governors, who, under different names, fulfilled substantially the same functions. The whole civil government was administered by them. All capital cases were brought

* The First Book of Smith's New Testament History gives in a brief compass an admirable resumé of this period of Jewish history.

before them for adjudication. The high-priest was appointed and removed at their pleasure. Their will was absolute law. From their decisions there was, except in the case of a Roman citizen, no appeal. At the command of Herod, the infant children of Bethlehem were slain without reason and without resistance.* At the command of Pontius Pilate, the Galileans gathering for sacrifice were massacred on their own altars.† In every principal town the Roman soldiery were quartered, and the Roman centurion, answering to our captain of infantry, reigned a petty, and, therefore, an intolerable despot.

Some ruins of the Mosaic tribunals, indeed, remained. In every synagogue was a local court; in every city a larger tribunal; while at Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim, instituted in the wilderness, and reinstated under the Maccabees, continued to hold its sessions. Very little jurisdiction, however, was left them save in ecclesiastical questions. They were powerless to protect the people from the exactions and oppressions of foreigners. Petty sins against the Mosaic law they were permitted to punish with excommunication, fine, and scourging. Occasionally, in an outburst of popular passion, the Jewish people arose to execute the illegal sentence of death pronounced by the highest of these courts;‡ but, for the most part, all important cases of a civil or criminal nature were determined by the Roman military authorities, who, irresponsible save to their superiors in office, meted out, as may be supposed, a very irregular kind of justice. They were flagrantly corrupt. The wealthy criminal was rarely punished; the wealthy suitor was seldom disappointed; while delays of justice were as common as its course was uncertain.§

* Matt. ii., 16–18. † Luke xiii., 1.

‡ As in the case of Stephen, Acts vii, 54–60.

§ Paul's experience, as gathered from the 25th and 26th chapters of Acts, affords a striking illustration of the administration of justice at this time. He is brought to trial before Felix, is interrupted in the middle of his plea,* and the farther trial of the case postponed to a "more convenient season" (Acts xxiv., 25), in hope that his friends will raise money and purchase his release (v. 26). Though a Roman citizen, he is left bound two years, Felix thus seeking to secure favor among the Jews (v. 27). He is at length

The Church outrivaled in degeneracy the state. Her priesthood, greedy, dissolute, and infidel, demanded unlawful fees for every temple service,* disgraced the religion they professed by the inhumanity† and profligacy of their lives,‡ and, shamelessly avowing themselves the disciples of Sadduceeism, the materialistic philosophy of their day, denied the immortality of the soul and the reality of the spiritual existence. The Temple, repeatedly desecrated and partially destroyed in the long and desolating wars, had been rebuilt by Herod, not from religious motives, but for political effect. But its true glory had departed. Its outer court, filled with sheep, and cattle, and money-changers' tables, was converted into a market-place, and the busy hum of many voices, the lowing of cattle, and the clinking of money mingled with the meaningless music of a service whose symbols remained but as a dead and unknown tongue that spoke no longer to the heart. From the days of Malachi to those of John the Baptist, nearly four centuries, no true prophet had appeared to stem the tide of increasing corruption, and their place was occupied by scribes, who substituted for the sublime moral and religious teachings of Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel the most puerile discussions of ceremonial regulation. The Scriptures alone were preserved intact in the general corruption. But there had grown up a body of oral tradition and rabbinical lore which had taken the place of the Scriptures, if not in the popular estimation, at least in that of the ecclesiastics, and which made the Scriptures of none effect.§ In brief, after the tempestuous experiences which we have recorded, the fragments of a wrecked Judaism alone remained. The nation retained its name, but not its national life. The Church preserved its

brought before Festus, and only escapes inevitable death (xxv., 9) by pleading his Roman citizenship, and appealing to the emperor (v. 11). And yet, though this appeal is final, and takes all jurisdiction out of the hands of Festus (v. 12), he is brought before the court again on the arrival of Agrippa, evidently not for an honest trial, since, after the appeal, no judgment, even of acquittal, can be rendered (xxvi., 32), but for the mere amusement of the king and queen.

* Mal. i., 10.

† Luke x., 31, 32. ‡ Hosea vi., 9. § Mark vii., 13.

form, but, without the life of piety, resembled a tree in winter, stripped of its foliage and frozen at its roots. The world waited a new and better revelation, while Herod unconsciously fulfilled the prophecy of the ancient patriarch, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto *Him* shall the gathering of the people be."*

When the blossom drops we know the fruit is coming. The once beautiful but now faded and withered blossom of Judaism dropped from its stalk that the fruit of Christianity which it foretold might take its place.

* Gen. xlix., 10.

CHAPTER IV.

JEWISH CIVILIZATION IN THE FIRST CENTURY.*

IN the midst of the civilization which Christianity has brought with it, it is not easy for us to conceive of the condition in which Christ found the world, and the circumstances amidst which he passed his life. Surrounded with all the appliances of modern science and art, we forget that Jesus lived at a time when mankind traveled not only without railroads and steam-boats, but without post-roads and carriages; transacted all their business not only without banks, paper currency, or credit, but, for the most part, without internal commerce or any system of domestic trade; acquired such education as was possible not only without adequate schools, but without books, papers, or accessible literature; pursued their various industries not only without the aid of the modern forces of steam and water, but without any considerable labor-saving machinery; and lived not only without the comforts which modern art affords, but without such seeming necessaries of life as chairs and fireplaces.

The political condition of Judea under the sceptre of Rome we have already partially described. With the imperial government came its elaborate system of taxation. The Roman provinces were well called tributary, since they did little else

* It is doubtful whether, to the common reader, the value of this chapter would be enhanced by reference to the numerous authorities which have been consulted in its preparation. Most of them would be inaccessible except to the few. I have, in the Appendix, referred to the more important of these works, and I believe the minutest detail is capable of verification. The passages of Scripture referred to in the notes are given, not as authorities for the statements made, but as illustrative of them.

than contribute to the already plethoric treasury of its luxurious capital. Every thing in a Roman province was taxed.* Every article exported paid for the privilege of going out; every article imported paid for the privilege of coming in; every article sold paid a tax of one per cent. on the purchase money; every slave twice that amount. To manumit him cost his owner five per cent. additional. Every house paid one tax, every door in it another, every column which adorned it a third. Every man of property paid for its peaceable possession a tax ranging sometimes as high as twelve per cent.; every poor man paid for the privilege of living a poll-tax practically determined by the greed of the gatherer and the poverty of his victim; and, finally, every old bachelor paid a special tax for the privilege of his independence.

This system of taxation, oppressive at the best, was made intolerable by the method of its collection, than which a corrupt court never devised one more nefarious. The provinces were farmed out by the Roman government to wealthy individuals, or joint-stock companies, who paid large sums for the privilege of extorting whatever their unscrupulous hands could wring from a poverty-stricken people. They, in turn, let these provinces in smaller districts to sub-contractors, who employed in the collection of the taxes the lowest and worst class of the native population, since no others would assume a task so odious. These are the publicans of the New Testament. Selected for their unscrupulousness and inhumanity, they combined the principles of a lower ward politician with the humane sentiments of a modern pugilist. Usually compelled to pay over to their superiors the exorbitant amount which the government had assessed upon their district, they were dependent for their support upon the excess which they were able to extort from an already overtaxed community. They overcharged when they had opportunity; they brought false charges of smuggling in order to extort hush money; they detained and opened letters on mere suspicion; they

* See Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, article "Vectigalia."

were well called the wolves and bears of human society, and by their conduct deserved their universal reputation, which was coined into a proverb current throughout the Roman Empire, "All the publicans are altogether robbers."*

Such a government did as little to preserve public tranquillity as to promote public prosperity. The sense of national oppression, intensified by religious rancor, kept the entire population in a state of suppressed ferment, which ever and anon broke out in open riotings, and eventually culminated in the dreadful scenes which accompanied the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The irregular administration of justice by courts lax and corrupt left each individual to redress by private revenge his real or fancied wrongs. The insecurity of life and property, and the unfruitfulness of honest industry, in a community where the rich were the lawful booty of the government drove men, embittered by injustice, into lives of professional robbery and pillage.

The southern deserts were full, as they still are, of wandering tribes of Bedouin Arabs, and the wild and rocky fastnesses of Northern Galilee with troops of well-organized brigands. These, making constant incursions into the open and cultivated country, bore off in a single night the ripened fruit of the year's labor. Only where their wide-extended desolations left nothing for the tax gatherers did the Roman legions undertake to guard the community from their rapacity.

Such a state of society forbade a scattered rural population. No well-stocked farms clothed the naked land with fruitfulness as with a garment. No peaceful country homes, embowered in trees, greeted the traveler with a kindly smile. The peasant population gathered in towns and villages for mutual protection. For greater security, these were built, in general, on the summit of the hills. From these centres the farmers issued in the morning to their daily toil, and returned at sunset to their nightly rest. But the land they tilled was constantly subjected to a predatory warfare like that which

* Smith's Bib. Dict., article "Publicans."

cursed the border counties of England and Scotland in the days of Bruce.

The cities were often considerable in size and pretentious in character. They were almost universally surrounded by walls, whose gates seldom admitted the traveler after nightfall. A council of elders, answering to our Common Council, and a governor of the city, resembling our mayor, maintained the form of municipal government, but, under the centralized despotism of Rome, little else than the form. There was no adequate police. The ancient watchmen, who in the days of Isaiah announced at night the hours as they passed,* were in effect supplanted by the centurion with his band, who was quartered in every considerable town, and who was answerable to his superior for its order. A foreign military force is a poor substitute for a domestic local police. So it proved in Palestine. Public riotings were quickly quelled;† private wrongs were rarely redressed.‡

In other respects the administration of city government presents but a sorry aspect in contrast to that presented by modern civilization. The city of New York expends annually one million of dollars on her public charities, and sustains not far from one hundred private institutions for the relief of the sick, the suffering, and the destitute. The only resemblance in Palestine to this intricate, though not always wisely-administered charity, was a tax levied on all residents and transient guests for the partial relief of the poor. Ten thousand lights in store and street give to the modern city its gayest aspect after dark, and for purposes of business and of pleasure turn night into day. The only relief to the darkness with which night enveloped the Jewish city was the flaming torch, borne in the hand of the adventurous spirit whom necessity compelled to traverse the narrow streets whose overtopping houses shut out the light even of the stars, and afforded admirable lurking-places for the thieves

* Isa. lii., 8; lxii., 6.

† Acts xxi., 31, 32; xix., 40.

‡ Acts xviii., 17.

who infested every considerable town. One hundred and forty miles of sewerage underlying the streets of Paris constitute an admirable and intricate system of water-courses, cleansing the city from its continually accumulating filth. There was not a sewer in all Palestine. In Jerusalem the sole substitute therefor were the fires of Gehenna, which, burning night and day in the Valley of Hinnom, consumed the offal of the city. In lieu of the broad, light, sunny, well-paved streets of the modern metropolis, were narrow, muddy, unpaved lanes, barely wide enough to enable two beasts of burden to pass each other. They were innocent of sidewalks, and unrelieved by a single shade-tree.

The imperious demands of thirst in Palestine compelled some provision for its relief. Often the water was brought some considerable distance by hand from neighboring wells. Thus Sychem and Nazareth were supplied. Sometimes the city depended on cisterns which caught and accumulated the falling rain. To such cisterns, broken and in ruins, the prophet compared the false gods for whom Israel had forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters.* To Jerusalem a supply was brought from Bethlehem by an aqueduct built by Solomon,† renewed by Hezekiah,‡ and rebuilt by Herod, the ruins of which remain to this day. Thus, of our modern municipal conveniences, our provision for fresh water may be said to be the only one borrowed from the past.

The Jewish town did not make up in beauty what it lacked in comfort. The narrow streets of a city, whose population was necessarily crowded within the compass of its walls, gave but little opportunity for architectural display, and none for those gardens which so greatly enhance the attractiveness of our rural towns. But, on the other hand, the suburbs were not characterized by that inextricable chaos which usually belongs to an American city. There was no growth, and none of that immaturity and imperfection which always accompanies growth. Just outside the city walls the wealth-

* Jer. ii., 13. † Eccles. ii., 5, 6. ‡ 2 Kings xx., 20; 2 Chron., xxxii., 30.

ier classes had their summer retreats. Wide-extended vineyards, orchards, flower and vegetable gardens, supplied the city with fruits and vegetables, a staple article of diet, and filled the air with the fragrance of blossoms in their season. For thirty miles in every direction these gardens surrounded the city of Damascus. It was literally embowered in luxuriant vegetation.

If we pass from the city to the individual home, we shall find as little to covet. The peasant's hut, built of mud or sun-burnt bricks, gradually dissolved under the influence of the weather; its perishable material alternately washing away in muddy streams in winter, and blown about in clouds of dust in the heats of summer. Sometimes an entire village was nearly destroyed by a violent storm of rain.* A single room combined parlor and chamber, kitchen and stable. The cattle shared this hovel with their owners. A platform, slightly raised above the earthy floor, prevented an intimacy too intolerable. Christ was not the only infant whom Palestine had seen cradled in a manger. Without window, fireplace, or chimney, the room was lighted, if at all, by an opening in the side or roof, which admitted, with disagreeable impartiality, rain and sunshine; and warmed by a fire burning on the floor, filling the room and blackening the ceiling with its smoke.

The houses of the wealthier classes, built of brick or stone, were frequently magnificent, never truly comfortable. In structure they were all similar.

Let us in imagination visit lhe house of a Jewish Rabbi.

Passing through an arched gateway which constitutes the front door, and pausing a moment to gaze at the inscriptions from the Jewish law which cover the door-posts, in compliance with the ancient Mosaic requirement,† we find ourselves in a court-yard in the centre of the house. The air is fragrant with flowers, and musical with the singing of birds and

* Brown's Antiq., ii., 215. To this fact Christ perhaps refers in Matt. vii., 27. Compare also Isaiah xxx., 13; Psalm lxii., 3. † Deut. xi., 20.

the merry laughter of a fountain. Here our host is accustomed to receive his guests. A rude bench affords us a momentary seat while we await his coming. The rooms of the first floor you observe all open from this central square, and there in the corner of the yard a staircase shall conduct us presently to a balcony, which, running round the house, forms the hall of the second story. The servants' quarters are there, and perhaps a room for children or for guests. But the principal rooms are below; for the Jew, like the Southron, is not fond of stairs, and prefers to live on the ground floor.

Reader, I beg leave to introduce you to our friend, the Rabbi Nicodemus.

You will not extend to him your hand, but will make him a low and somewhat obsequious bow. You are hardly familiar enough with him to proffer the kiss, and your American pride will scarcely allow you to recognize his superiority by kissing the hand which, nevertheless, he may with haughty condescension extend to you for that purpose. You will greet him with "Peace be with you," or "The Lord be with you;" and you will mean about as much by it in Palestine as you mean by "Good-by," or "How do you do?" in America.

It is not likely that we should ever see any thing more of the Rabbi Nicodemus's house than we see now, had we not some special privileges, as readers always have; for the Rabbi's guests seldom pass beyond this court-yard, which is at once hall, reception-room, and parlor. But, having special privileges, we will avail ourselves of them to enter the rooms within; and certainly it is our first impression that art has added nothing in the nineteenth century to the luxury of the first. Resplendent curtains of cloth and silk, purple, blue, crimson, cover with their magnificent draperies the otherwise naked walls of stone. Rich carpets from the East, whence still our richest fabrics come, partially cover the tiled floors. The ceiling of wood, painted, carved, paneled, outvies in costly elegance our most elaborate frescoing.* Cush-

* See Jer. xxii., 14.

ions ranged along the side of the room invite us to luxurious repose. A simple table and a couch, that is both sofa by day and bed by night, complete the furniture of the room. But where is the fireplace? My dear friend, there is not, in this first year of our Lord a chimney in all Palestine. Even in the palace a brazier filled with burning coals is the best substitute which wealth can find for our open grates and luxurious furnaces;* and the arch-enemy of all health and happiness has not yet invented that insidious disturber of domestic peace and destroyer of family health, the air-tight stove. The window? There is no glass in Palestine. And in the homes of even the wealthiest, the open lattice-work, constituting their only window, affords but imperfect light to the room which it equally imperfectly protects from wind and rain. The chandelier? If there be one, it is more ornate in form than useful in fact. The gayest festival which Dives ever gives depends for illumination on a smoking wick floatng in a cup of oil, or on the lurid glare of the primitive cresset.

The ladies will not be content with this glimpse of the outer life. They will inquire curiously for the kitchen. The thrift of an American, at least of a Northern farmer, is measured by the capacity of his barns; that of his wife by the capaciousness and convenience of her kitchen. With its cold water brought by an aqueduct from a neighboring spring, its modern stove, its brick oven, its capacious pantries, its shining array of polished pans and burnished kettles—every one a mirror—its adjoining wash-room, with boiler set and always ready with warm water, its patent churn, that mints the golden butter with marvelous celerity, and its great woodshed close at hand, piled full of hickory and maple, the American kitchen is the heart of the whole house, and its pulsations are felt from attic to cellar—the most vital organ of the whole domestic economy. The ladies, therefore, will not unnaturally demand to see the kitchen.

It is doubtful whether their curiosity can be gratified.

* John xviii., 18.

To be frank, it is doubtful whether Lady Nicodemus has a kitchen. Her culinary art and its conveniences are about such as characterize the camp of an American lumberman.

Three stones, arranged in backwoods fashion about a fire built upon the ground, constitute her range. Water she brings upon her head from a neighboring well, sometimes half a mile or more distant.* Wood is scarce. Coal is unknown. What the American boys burn for their bonfires, the Jewish wife carefully collects for her fuel—clippings from the grove or the orchard, and dried stalks or old straw from the field.† She grinds her wheat in a hand-mill in quantities as needed, and its music, like that of the coffee-mill in the New-England village, follows close on the crowing of the cock in every house in the Holy Land.‡ She bakes her bread by burying it in the ashes; or perhaps she has a little movable brick oven, clay-lined. More frequently she supplies her household from the public bakery.§ She roasts her meat by sewing it in the skin in which nature first inclosed it, and covering it with the glowing embers; she churns her butter by putting it in a leathern bag, and shaking it violently to and fro upon a pole. When all domestic labor was a drudgery, wonder not that woman was a slave.

If, however, women had few conveniences for meeting the demands of an epicure, the modern epicure was not there to trouble her. If art had not introduced the conveniences, neither had refinement produced the demands of modern civilization. The luxury which corrupted Greece and Rome was known in Palestine at the time of which we write, if at all, only in the houses of Greek and Roman. The wants of the Jew were few and simple. The hours for meals were about the same as those still maintained in the rural regions of New England. Our host rises with the sun to an early breakfast, dines at noon, and sups at sundown. He invites us to remain to supper. We will accept the invitation.

* See John iv., 7.
† John xv., 6; Matt. xiii., 30.
‡ Matt. xxiv., 41.
§ Lev. xxvi., 26; Jer. xxxvii., 21.

This supper is our principal meal. He provides water for our hands; and as our feet, unprotected by shoes or stockings, are rather the worse for our walk through the dusty streets, a servant unlooses our sandals and washes our feet as well. The tables are arranged on three sides of a square; the fourth is left open for the servants. The Rabbi seats you next himself, the place of honor; for every seat is numbered, and the controversies for precedence in rank are sometimes strangely bitter. In our democratic atmosphere, it is hard to understand the state of society which gives such significance to Christ's rebuke of these unseemly social contentions. The host utters grace, and, without farther ceremony, the meal begins.

Nicodemus's ancestors have borrowed from the East, during the long Babylonish captivity, some customs which he still retains. The guests recline in an attitude which, however awkward it may seem to you, to them seems the perfection of luxury. The table is covered with flowers; the room is scented with perfumes; and through the open door there is wafted from the court the fragrance of the garden, the music of its fountain, and the song of its many birds.

Perhaps our host has killed and dressed with his own hand a kid for our special honor. Perhaps he has found in the market a fish brought from the Sea of Galilee, or the shores of the Mediterranean. Fruits and bread constitute, however, the staple articles of diet. There are no American pies, no English puddings, no French confections. Milk and wine are the beverages. China has not sent hither her teas, nor Java her coffee; and as for total abstinence societies, they are as little known outside the circle of a few religious ascetics as is that universal drunkenness which necessitated them.

Pray why do you wait? For your knife and fork? My good friend, there are none. The Rabbi has never heard of those modern conveniences. You must imitate your companions. Help yourself; take the meat in your fingers, if you take it at all, and dip your bread in the dish of gravy which

passes from guest to guest for that purpose. If your host should happen to hand you some delicate morsel, do not scruple to receive it from his fingers; it is a special attention to a favored guest. This careful washing of the hands before every meal is not, you must now confess, altogether a ceremonial observance.

Before you bid adieu to your host, you may follow him up that staircase we noted to the flat roof which covers and completes the house, and constitutes an important feature of it. Here you may take with him a siesta, if you will, or sit smoking your evening pipe. Here, if the night be hot, he will bring his mattress by-and-by, making his roof his sleeping apartment. Here his good wife, too, hangs out her linen to dry, and prepares her figs and raisins, spreading them out in the warm sunlight; and on the adjoining roof you may presently see his neighbor, under the false pretense of seeking retirement, perform his evening devotions, that he may be seen of men.

The dress of the Rabbi Nicodemus and his household is not less worthy of our observation than his house and its furniture. It merits a moment's description. The material of the ancient Jews' attire was the same as now employed, woolen, cotton, linen, and sometimes, though more rarely, silk. Its construction was simple, and the articles of raiment few. Its most usual ground color was white. Its ornamentation was showy and elaborate.

The slave wore but a single garment—a long tunic reaching to the ground, and gathered by a girdle about his waist. With all other garments laid aside, and his loins girt about, the Christian is commanded to await the commands of his Lord. The master, over a similar tunic, wore a garment like a gentleman's modern dressing-gown, the white ground usually interwoven with threads of crimson and scarlet in the fabric, and often richly embroidered by the busy fingers of his industrious wife. If he were going out he wrapped about him his burnouse, a quadrangular piece of cloth somewhat

resembling a gentleman's shawl; a turban or a hood was the covering of his head. His wife wore a somewhat similar apparel. In public, however, she was completely enveloped in her outer cloak, and closely veiled, so that her guests saw really but little more of her attire than of her features. Eighteen centuries has made but little change in the garments of the East, and between the dress of the modern Syrian and that of the ancient Jew there is but little difference.*

Vanity of dress, however, is not modern. Though there was not, in the days of Christ, a glass window in all Palestine, there was not a house without a mirror made of polished metal. The dress of the poor varied from that of the rich only in the cost, scarcely in the amount of ornamentation. A modern belle, looking on her Jewish prototype, might certainly lament the degeneracy of the age. To the ear-rings of modern times she added a ring in the nose. The single bracelet of to-day is all that is left of the armlets which literally covered her arms from the shoulder to the wrist. The cosmetics secretly applied are a substitute for the paint with which she ornamented her face with as little secrecy as a modern belle employs in adding to her hair. Pins sparkling with precious stones gathered her loose and flowing robes into folds about her neck and waist. Rings loaded down her hand, whose whiteness was outdazzled by their brilliancy. Chains of gold, with pearls and emeralds attached, hanging from the neck, bore no watch indeed, but some sacred amulet. Manacles of the same precious metal encircled the ankles, and, chained together, compelled the mincing gait which the modern beauty has to study, while tinkling ornaments pendent from it made it literally true that she had music wherever she went. In her hand she carried the curiously-wrought handkerchief which the modern lady still carries,

* The limits of these pages do not permit a detailed description of the varieties of costume, which are here, therefore, only described in general terms. For fuller descriptions the reader is referred to the various authorities cited in the Appendix.

and the box of delicate perfumery which her successor leaves upon the toilet-table.* How extensive was the use of jeweled ornaments, even in the days of Moses, is indicated by the fact that they furnished gold enough to make the sacred utensils for the tabernacle after, by one melting, the people had made the golden calf,† while the women's brazen mirrors furnished the laver of brass for the tabernacle service.‡

In the days of Christ intercommunication was difficult. To the ancient Jew Palestine was practically almost as great a country as the United States to us. Eighteen centuries have produced but little change, and the modern book of travels depicts with tolerable accuracy the methods in vogue in the first century. There were almost literally no roads. Wild, rocky, and often dangerous paths, barely wide enough for a single mule, leading over the mountains and down the steep ravines, provided the means of transit which are now afforded by our broad wagon roads and swift, smooth railways. God had prohibited the importation of horses into Palestine.§ They were never to any considerable extent employed. The only carriage was a rough, two-wheeled cart, and this was of little service in the hill-country. The men generally traveled on foot; mules and camels carried the women and children. The insecurity of the country rendered it then, as now, almost indispensable to go in caravans. A staff carried in the hand was the traveler's almost constant companion; a bag, suspended from the neck or bound upon the back, constituted his usual baggage.‖

Such a thing as an inn, in the modern acceptation of the term, was unknown. In the larger towns were halting-places for travelers, resembling the wagon-yards which are to be found in our Western towns. Here the traveler could procure shelter for his cattle and himself. He could obtain water, and permission to cook, in a court or square, such articles

* For a description of ancient dress, see Isa. iii., 18–24.
† Exod. xxxii., 2–4; xxxv., 22.
‡ Exod. xxxviii., 8.
§ Deut. xvii., 16.
‖ See 1 Sam. xvii., 40.

of food as he possessed, in such utensils as he carried with him. Even Jerusalem probably contained no better provision for the traveler than this. Private hospitality helped to provide, however, what public accommodation failed to afford.

The Jews were not a commercial people. The commerce which Solomon attempted to establish decayed at his death, and was never revived. But internal trade was greatly developed by the national feasts which called all the people to Jerusalem thrice a year. On these occasions traders opened temporary booths at the public gates, and finally, at the time of Christ, intruding nearer and nearer to the Temple, which was the great centre of attraction, had converted its outer court into a market-place. The money was wholly hard currency—gold, silver, copper. Banks, and notes, and bills, it is hardly necessary to state, were unknown. All business was strictly for cash. The fiction of thirty days was not invented. The division into wholesale and retail trade is of later origin. The booths which accompany a modern agricultural fair are a modification of ancient commerce, and afford a fair illustration of its character.*

Manufactures were of the simplest kind. There was little or no machinery. No busy wheels made the mountain streams of Northern Judea do the work of many men. No priest had yet pronounced the marriage vows between fire and water, and consecrated its giant child to the service of humanity. There were workers in iron, bronze, silver, and gold, who united the labors of the blacksmith with those of the jeweler; but so simple an invention as the bellows had not been thought of, and the workman, with no other means of stimulating the furnace fire than blowing it through a long pipe, had hard work and but poor pay. The carpenter was housebuilder and carver too. But his tools were few; a rude sort of plane, a saw, a chisel, a drill or awl, a mallet in lieu of hammer, an axe and nails, seemingly his chief utensils.

Masons worked in brick and stone as early at least as the

* See Neh. xiii., 15–21.

days of Solomon. Ship-builders constructed the simple vessels which served the fisherman's art on the Sea of Galilee. The women, as in the last century in New England, did all, or nearly all the spinning and weaving, which were known only as household arts; and they added skillful embroidery with the needle, in which later ingenuity has not considerably improved upon them.*

The chief avocation of the Jew, however, was agriculture. But what modern farmer, with his well-fenced farm, his bursting barns and granaries, his innumerable plows, and drills, and reapers, and mowers, and threshers, in the midst of which he stands bewildered by the very multiplicity of the conveniences that are offered to him, would recognize the Jewish agriculturist? An indescribable thing which they called a plow curried the earth for sowing; a second currying covered in the seed, which no wonder the fowls of the air came and devoured. The ripened grain was sometimes gathered by the sickle, more frequently pulled up by the roots.† The stalks gave the housewife her fuel; the cattle trampled out the grain to thresh it;‡ the farmer tossed it in the air against the wind to winnow it;§ and, finally, he buried it in the ground to store it.

Wheat was the staple product of the farmer; but the vineyard was a greater favorite than the farm. These vineyards covered the now bare and barren hillsides of Judea, which were terraced to their very summit, and produced every variety of fruit which a climate that commingles the torrid and the temperate zones can easily supply. But wild beasts preyed upon them; wilder men plundered them; and neither the thick walls of stone, nor the almost impenetrable hedges, nor the watchman, who never left them in the ripening season, day or night, were able to afford them adequate protection.‖ In short, agriculture, in the degenerate days of Juda-

* See Proverbs xxxi., 13, 19, 21–24.
† Isaiah xvii., 5.
‡ Deut. xxv., 4; 1 Cor. ix., 9.
§ Luke iii., 17.
‖ See, for description of the ancient vineyard, Isaiah v., 1–6.

ism, was pursued in Palestine under circumstances scarcely more favorable than those which existed in East Tennessee during the late Civil War.

Such, briefly etched, was the civil and social condition of the Jews at the time of Christ. A military despotism, that cared nothing for the people except to gather from their hard-earned pittance all that rapacity could extort, subjected them to a most corrupt, oppressive, and nefarious taxation. Courts of justice existed only in name; the military rulers, who occupied every considerable town, were in fact the supreme judges of the land. Robbery and violence were the common curse of the entire country, and compelled the people to dwell in towns and travel in companies for protection. The houses, in the case of the peasants, were wretched one-roomed huts of mud; in the case of the wealthiest, were barren of the simplest necessities of modern life, though ornate with luxury. The table was bare of modern delicacies; but the dress outrivaled ours, if not in taste, at least in showy ornaments. An almost roadless country confined the people to their houses, or left them to make their journeys chiefly upon foot; and a territory cut off from other lands, excluding the people from commerce, and all but the simplest domestic manufactures, made them almost of necessity a nation of farmers and gardeners, as a little later their dispersion through the world drove them from the farm to the peddler's pack, and later to the shop. Such, in brief outline, was the condition of the Jewish people when the story of Christ's life opens; a nation with some forms of luxury, but without the arts and sciences of civilization; with the ritual of an ancient religion, but without the spirit of a true one; with the ruins of a once noble republic, but without that life of liberty which alone makes the true state.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF JESUS.*

ABOUT five miles south of Jerusalem lies the little village of Bethlehem. It is one of the oldest towns of Palestine, and one of the most noted. Near it is the tomb where Jacob buried his much-loved Rachel.† In the valleys which it overlooks was the field of Boaz, where Ruth gleaned for grain and harvested a husband.‡ Within its precincts, David, her great-grandson, was born; here he was anointed king;§ and in the neighboring fields, where a thousand years later the birth of the Son of David was announced to the watching shepherds, he watched his father's flocks. Here, in his after history, his three officers broke through the Philistine host to bring their king water from the well of his childhood.‖ And hither, in the fourth century after Christ, Jerome, fleeing from persecution, lived for a quarter of a century, engaged in his great work, the composition of the Latin translation of the Scriptures, the accepted version of the Roman Catholic Church.¶

In this little hamlet, for the village was an inconsiderable one, Jesus was born. The day of his birth is unknown. The Christmas, which by common consent is celebrated throughout Christendom as his birthday, was fixed upon by Pope Julius I. in the fourth century.** Even the year is involved in uncertainty. We know, however, that Cæsar Augustus

* Luke i., 26–56; ii.; Matt. i., 18–25; ii., 1–23.
† Gen. xxxv., 19. ‡ Ruth i., 19. § 1 Sam. xvi., 1–13.
‖ 2 Sam. xxiii., 15–17.
¶ Smith's Dict. of the Bible, art. Vulgate; Dict. of Gr. and Roman Biog., art. Hieronymus. ** Appleton's Cyc., art. Christmas.

THE NATIVITY.

was emperor of Rome,* and that Herod was drawing toward the close of his reign as king of Judea.† Of his mother we know but little. She was of the tribe of Judah, belonged to a royal family, traced her genealogy back to David,‡ and was connected by marriage with one of the chief priests.§ She was a woman of warm heart, ardent impulses, and resolute will. This much the brief sketches of her life and character disclose. At the time of the annunciation, she started, with impetuous haste and unattended, for a journey across the country from Galilee to Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth,‖ no slight undertaking in those days. Later, dreading lest in her son's religious zeal he should destroy himself, with the enthusiasm of an invincible love she undertook to pass through the crowd, and, with loving compulsion, bring him home to the rest which her mother-heart saw he so greatly needed.¶ Finally, standing with pierced and broken heart the resolute witness of his sufferings and death upon the cross, she looked on, a patient sufferer with him to the last.** She was a devout, God-fearing woman,†† free from the ceremonial degeneracy of her times, possessed a good religious education, was more familiar with Scripture than with rabbinical lore, was of thoughtful disposition,‡‡ and possessed in a devout, emotional imagination the characteristics of an ancient prophetess. The thanksgiving psalm which she composed, at the time when the angel announced to her the anticipated birth of Jesus, reminds us strongly of the ancient odes which

* Luke ii., 1. † Matt. ii., 1.

‡ Luke i., 27; Rom. i., 3. Two genealogies of Christ, quite different, are given—one by Matthew, the other by Luke. Two explanations of this variance are afforded—one, that Luke gives the genealogy through Mary, and Matthew through Joseph (Kitto's Daily Bible Illustr., Life of our Lord, 28th week): the other, now generally accepted by Biblical scholars, that Luke gives the natural descent, and Matthew the regal succession.—(Ellicott's Life of our Lord, page 99, note.) A careful comparison of these genealogies, however, leads to the conclusion, whichever theory is adopted, that both Joseph and Mary were of the house and lineage of David, and probably cousins.—See Smith's Bible Dict., art. Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

§ Luke i., 5, 36. ‖ Luke i., 39. ¶ Mark iii., 21–31.

** John xix., 25. †† Luke i., 38. ‡‡ Luke ii., 19, 51.

Aaron's sister, Miriam, wrote when Israel had crossed the Red Sea, and Samuel's mother, Hannah, uttered when her child was consecrated to the service of God.*

Of his reputed father, Joseph, we know even less. He belonged to the poorest of the peasantry.† He was a carpenter by trade, an avocation which included house-building and carving. His little shop was in the village of Nazareth. He, too, claimed royal blood, but manifested no such royal characteristics as did his wife. A simple peasant he seems to have been, an upright man,‡ obedient alway to the divine command,§ but somewhat timid withal,‖ and of no great influence in his little community.¶ He died, apparently, before Jesus became of age, and, as we know but little of him, so with him our history has but little do.

We have called him Christ's reputed father; for Jesus always claimed to be the Son of God, and finally died in attestation of that claim.** Its significance is interpreted to us by the annunciation which heralded his advent. For when to the yet Virgin Mary an angelic messenger announced the son to whom she should give birth, perplexed, she asked the question, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" and received the answer, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."†† We accept, undoubting, the verity of this narrative, and reverently recognize the mystery of his birth who is the only-begotten Son of the Infinite Father.

He was born, we have said, in Bethlehem, though his pa-

* An analysis of this hymn (Luke i., 46–55) shows in its author an appreciative acquaintance with the poetry of the Old Testament.

† Luke ii., 24. Only the poorest offered doves or pigeons.—See Townsend's note, *in loc.* ‡ Matt. i., 19.

§ Matt. i., 24; ii., 14, 21. ‖ Matt. ii., 22. ¶ John vi., 42.

** Matt. xxvi., 63–65. See account of Jesus's trial in the chapter entitled "The Court of Caiaphas," and a restatement of the claims which he preferred concerning himself in that entitled "Guilty or not Guilty."

†† Luke i., 30–35.

rents were Galileans. Cæsar Augustus had ordered a census* to be taken, whether of the empire, or only of Palestine, is perhaps uncertain.† In compliance with the Jewish custom, each family went up to its own city to be enrolled;‡ for this purpose, Joseph and Mary, of the house and lineage of David, went up to David's city. The little inn§ was crowded; there was no room for them there; they were compelled to seek refuge in a stable. The limestone hills of Southern Judea abound with caves, which are often used for this purpose. The one in which tradition asserts that Jesus was born is still shown the traveler by the reverential monks.

Simple as was the birth of him whose advent was to revolutionize the world, it was attended with some singular and significant events, which have ever since surrounded it with a peculiar romantic interest. The imaginary portraits of the Infant and his mother have been a favorite theme of the artist from the earliest ages of the Church. The account of the shepherds watching their flocks by night, and startled by the angelic announcement of the Messiah's birth; of the devout Simeon and Anna in the Temple, recognizing in the child the promised hope of Israel; of the wise men of the East following the star, and offering to the child Jesus their treasures brought from afar, have become familiarized to every child by many a sermon, song, and story. One of these incidents, however, deserves special mention here, both because of its inherent significance and its influence on the life of Jesus.

Not only by the Jews, by the whole world a Messiah was expected. Mankind not only sadly needed, but sorrowfully waited a new revelation. The people believed all religions

* Not a taxation as in our English version (Luke ii., 1), but a preparatory enrollment.—*Alford, in loc.* Smith's Bible Dict., art. *Taxing.*

† Kitto's Bible Illustr., Life of our Lord, 28th week.

‡ The interpretation that they went to be enrolled, and that the taxation was not completed till later, during the governorship of Cyrenius, seems the best explanation, because the simplest of the chronological puzzle involved in Luke ii., 1, 2. For the theory of two enrollments, see *Alford, in loc.*

§ For description of an Oriental inn, see chapter iv.

to be equally true; the philosophers esteemed them all equally false. Humanity confessed itself ignorant of its God and of its future. The poetic fictions of Hades and Elysium no longer satisfied the reason or touched the imagination. "Is there any old woman," cried Cicero, "silly enough still to fear the monsters of hell?" In God none longer hoped. For ages in the Egyptian Temple the inscription had been read, "I am she that was, and is, and shall be, and no one has ever drawn aside my veil." For years the Athenians had worshiped at the altar of an unknown god; and no wonder, since the known gods were despicable. They were no longer the subjects of even a superstitious reverence. The oracles were silent. The temples were desecrated by vices which were banished from society. Plato forbade intemperance *except* in the feast of Bacchus. Aristotle permitted lewd images *only* of the gods. The Babylonians compelled every native female to attend the Temple of Venus once in her life, and prostitute herself in honor of the goddess. "It is difficult," says Pliny, "to say whether it might not be better for men to have no religion than to have such a one as ours."*

Perhaps this universal discontent had begotten a hope of relief. Perhaps the mysterious promise made to Adam in the garden—the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head†—had repeated itself vaguely in the expectancy of mankind. Perhaps the echoes of the Jewish prophetic writings had been indistinctly caught up by other nations amongst whom the Jewish people had been dispersed. Certain it is that more or less definitely this expectation had found expression. Socrates in his last hours had commended his disciples to search the world for a charmer able to redeem from fear of death.‡ Confucius had prophesied the appearance of a sage in the West whose coming should revolutionize the

* See, for an account of the religious condition of the world prior to the time of Christ, Pressensé's Religions before Christ, especially p. 167–175.

† Genesis iii., 15.

‡ The Phædo, Bohn's edition, p. 80. See a beautiful poem of Mrs. H. B. Stowe, of which this incident is the text.—Religious Poems, p. 6.

world; and a deputation sent forth from China to learn of him, brought back with them the reformed religion, but heartless philosophy of Buddha. "Among many," writes Tacitus, "there was a persuasion that in the ancient books of the priesthood it was written that at this precise time the East should become mighty, and that the sovereigns of the world should issue from Judea."* "In the East," writes Suetonius, "an ancient and consistent opinion prevailed that it was fated there should issue at this time from Judea those who should obtain universal dominion."† Among these prophecies of the "coming man," none was so clear and definite as that of Zoroaster, the founder of the Persian religion. He had foretold the coming of a prophet who should be begotten in a supernatural way; should bring a new revelation to a waiting world; should conquer Ahriman, the spirit of evil; should found a kingdom of righteousness and peace. Later traditions, borrowed, perhaps, from the Jews during their captivity, led his disciples to expect that he would come of the seed of Abraham.‡ These disciples were careful students of the stars. The heavenly bodies were accepted by them as symbols and manifestations of the deity. Astrology was thus at once the foundation of knowledge and of worship. Science and religion were one. The priests were savants. The stars were the subjects of their studies and their adoration; they were believed to exercise an important influence on the destinies of mankind; a comprehension of their movements was believed to afford valuable information concerning the future. To placate the baneful star, to adore the beneficent one, was in large measure the object of their worship.§

In their nightly studies, these priests and philosophers of the olden time were surprised by the sudden appearance of

* Tac., Hist., x., 13. † Suet., Ves., p. 4.

‡ Smith's Bible Dict., art *Magi*.

§ For an account of ancient astronomy, see M'Clintock and Strong's Bib. Cyc., art. *Astronomy*.

a strangely brilliant star. It is historically certain that a remarkable conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurred at this time. Possibly it was this that attracted their attention; possibly a comet or a meteor, specially sent by God as the herald of his Son.* Whatever it may have been, they rightly interpreted it as a sign that the long-expected Deliverer had come. A deputation of their number followed it westward. It led them toward the kingdom of Judea; then it seems to have vanished from their sight. Uncertain which way to go, they directed their steps to the capital. Here, in Jerusalem, they thought to find an aroused and enthusiastic people paying their homage to the new-born king. To their surprise, no one had even heard of him. Their anxious inquiries came to the jealous ears of Herod; the Sanhedrim were assembled; all Jerusalem was thrown into ferment.† The Scribes, studying their ancient writings, counseled the wise men that Bethlehem was the birthplace of the anticipated Messiah. Directed, first by this prophecy, then by the star—which now reappeared—they found, at length, the object of their search, and offered to the infant Jesus their treasures of frankincense and myrrh.

Significant as was this visit of the Magi as a fulfillment of the prophecy, "Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to

* "In the year 747 of Rome, on the 20th of May, a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurred in that part of the heavens in which, according to astrology, signs denoted the most notable events. It was repeated on the 27th of October, and again on the 12th of November. The first of these conjunctions would rise, to the Abyssinian, *in the East*, 3½ hours before sunrise. The journey to Bethlehem would occupy about five months, and the November conjunction would be before them, when at Jerusalem, in the direction of Bethlehem. It was a tradition with the Jews that a similar conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn preceded the birth of Moses, and there are indications that not only the Jews, but also the Chaldeans, regarded such a conjunction an indication of the near approach of the Messiah."—Condensed from Alford's note on Matt. ii., 2. This explanation is rejected by Ellicott (Life of our Lord, p. 78, *n.*), who adopts the opinion that the star was a luminous body of a meteoric nature, but subject to special laws regulating its appearance, and, perhaps, also its motions.

† Matt. ii., 3. Literally, "was agitated."

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

the brightness of thy rising,"* it was equally important in its effect upon Jesus. Humanly speaking, it nearly cost him his life.

We have said that Herod was the King of the Jews. It is perhaps doubtful whether a worse king ever sat on the throne of a suffering people. He is fairly entitled to the cognomen of Great only by his pre-eminence in wickedness. His whole career exhibits him as a cunning adventurer, an unscrupulous self-seeker, and a relentless despot. He was made governor of Galilee by his father at the early age of fifteen. He demonstrated his energy and courage by his successful campaign against the brigands who infested its northern mountains. But this energy and courage was directed by

* Isaiah lx., 3.

an ambition wholly selfish. Perceiving the growing power of Rome, he secured its favor by oppressive taxation, at the cost of his own people. So effectually did he alienate their affections, that, on their complaint, he was summoned to trial before the Sanhedrim, and escaped the penalties justly incurred by his oppressions only by flight. Nothing daunted, he courted successfully the favor of the Roman rulers. With the craftiness of a wily politician, studying the complications at Rome which resulted in the establishment of the Roman Empire, he succeeded in securing the favor and patronage, in succession, of Cassius, of Antony, and of Cæsar. Upon the fall of his respective patrons, he transferred his allegiance, with unblushing assurance, to their rivals and successors. Through Antony's influence he was proclaimed King of Judea by the Roman Senate. Upon Antony's fall, Cæsar confirmed him in his position; and, as he always rendered a good revenue to his Roman masters, the just complaints of his subjects were unavailing against him. A time-server at home as well as abroad, all religions were equally accepted by him as a means of securing popular favor. He rebuilt the Temple at Jerusalem for the Jews; he constructed another on Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans; he established a heathen worship in Cæsarea for the Romans. He was alike regardless of all considerations of justice, all obligations of religion, and all claims of natural affection. His jealousy of real or fancied rivals increased with his increasing power. He formed a design of establishing on the Jewish throne a permanent Herodian dynasty, and making of the Jewish nation again an independent, though not a free people. Whatever, to his suspicious nature, seemed to stand in the way of this design, no scruple prevented him from removing, at whatever cost. A terrible distemper, which finally brought his wretched life to a yet more wretched end, increased toward its close his unreasonable suspicions, and aggravated the asperities of his temper. Every one seemed, to his jealous disposition, to be conspiring against his throne. In succession,

his wife's grandfather, his wife herself, and three of his own sons, were slain by his command, sacrifices to his insane suspicions.* Such a monarch could ill brook a rival king of the Jews. The fact that the wise men of his own land agreed in testifying that ancient prophecy foretold the birth of such a prince and deliverer intensified his jealousy, and strengthened his malign purpose. At first, with his customary craft, he bade the Magi seek out the young Messiah, that he too might worship him. That, when he found himself mocked by them, his rage passed all bounds, is consonant with all we know of his character. His cruel order for the massacre of the infant children of Bethlehem is quite in keeping with the cruelties of the age, the absolute authority he possessed, and the other well-known facts of his career. It fulfilled the prophecy of the Psalmist, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed."† His measures were as unsuccessful as they were monstrous. Jesus, escaping with his parents from Judea, remained in Egypt till Herod's death, a few months later. Then they returned by a wide detour to Joseph's home, Nazareth in Galilee. Here Joseph resumed his handicraft after his long absence; and here Jesus spent his childhood and youth, growing up in his parent's home, and subject to their will.

Galilee is the New England of Palestine. The White Mountains of the Holy Land‡ tower up on its northern boundary ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. The snow never leaves their summit. The flowers never leave their verdure-clad vales. "Lebanon carries," says an Arab proverb, "winter on its head, spring on its shoulders, and harvest in its bosom, while summer sleeps at its feet."§ Cool breezes from these snow-clad peaks fan the country which they overlook. The hills are thickly wooded. Silvery streams

* For a fuller history of King Herod, see Josephus, Ant., bk. xiv.–xvii.
† Ps. ii.. 2. ‡ The meaning of the word Lebanon is white.
§ Henderson's Commentary on Isaiah x., 34.

water its verdant glades. Wild flowers in abundance fill the air with their fragrance. The walnut, palm, olive, and fig cover its southern slopes. The dwarf oak, intermixed with tangled shrubberies of hawthorn and arbutus, clothes its northern hills. Fertile upland plains, green forest glades, wild, picturesque glens, with the beautiful Lake Tiberias embosomed in the midst of romantic mountain scenery, combine to render Galilee one of the richest and most beautiful sections of Palestine, if not of the Oriental world. Its towns and villages, once busy, though now deserted and in ruins, formerly added the charm of industry and life.*

Among the most favored spots of this favored region is the village of Nazareth. It reposes in the bosom of a beautiful valley, secluded by surrounding hills, and filled with cornfields, vineyards, and gardens. Sheltered from the bleaker winds of the north, it luxuriates in the fragrant blossoms and ripened fruits of the pomegranate, orange, fig, and olive. The neighboring hill behind the town commands a magnificent view of the surrounding country. From its summit Jesus must often have looked upon Galilee spread out as a map beneath his feet. On the north the snowy peak of Hermon lifts itself up in clear relief against the background of the deep blue sky. On the east, over the intervening hills, a glimpse of the Lake Tiberias reveals itself. Close at hand was the mountain where, later, he preached that ever-memorable discourse known as the "Sermon on the Mount." Within the range of his vision were Acre, famous in its after history for its successful resistance to the protracted siege of Napoleon; Cana, where the water was made wine; Nain, where the wid-

* On the whole, the best description I have seen of Galilee is that of Stanley (Sinai and Palestine, ch. x.). That of Renan (Life of Jesus, ch. viii.) is a glowing but fanciful picture; that of Pressensé (Life of Christ, bk. ii., ch. ii., p. 344), though more reliable, is still somewhat exaggerated. The same thing may be said of Hepworth Dixon (Holy Land, ch. xviii.), whose pictures are too generally paintings, not photographs. Robinson's portraitures, always reliable, are rarely warm. They are generally those of a statistician and geographer. Robinson's Res., vol. iii., § xiv., xv. Compare, also, Osborne's Palestine, ch. xi.

ow's son was raised; Endor, where the witch appeared to Saul; Jezreel, the royal residence of the infamous Ahab. Before him nestled his own beautiful village of Nazareth, while beyond it Mount Carmel, the retreat of the ancient prophet Elijah, jutted out into the Mediterranean, the blue of whose waters, sparkling in the sun, was just discernible in the far northwest.*

Amid these romantic mountains and fertile vales Jesus spent his boyhood. Here he often wandered, picking the wild flowers, gratifying that love of nature which so characterized his after life and teachings. Into the mountain solitudes with which this rural region abounds he loved to retreat from the distasteful crowd and bustle of the great cities. Here he commenced his ministry. Here he wrought most of his miracles. First in the synagogue, and then in the valleys and on the hill-sides of Galilee, he preached most of the discourses which have been preserved and handed down to us. From the simple fishermen who lived and labored on the shore of Lake Tiberias he selected most of his companions and apostles. Among these mountains he organized his little Church, and sent his followers forth to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And at the setting of the sun, in the quiet wooded glades of Galilee, rather than in the synagogue and the Temple, he sought that solitude for which his heart yearned, that he might commune with his Father and his God.

The influences which surrounded Christ in his childhood certainly could have contributed but little to the greatness of his ripened character. The inhabitants of Galilee were a simple humble peasantry, industrious, but plain; unpretending in their appearance, untutored in their habits. Their pursuits and modes of life were very simple. They caught fish on the lakes; they reared flocks and herds on the mountain sides; they cultivated corn and olives in the valleys and on the slopes of the hills.† They had little wealth. They

* For a description of this view, see Robinson's Res., vol. iii., § xiv., p. 189. † See Memoirs of the Holy Land, Harper's Mag., vol. vi., p. 289.

had not the culture and refinement which belonged to the richer and more luxurious inhabitants of Judea. Twenty of their chief cities had been given by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre,* and their inhabitants, intermarried with other races, no longer preserved a pure Jewish blood. Their religion was perhaps as pure, but it was far more simple. The elaborate ceremonialism of the later Pharisees had never taken strong hold among them. Their very speech was provincial.† The haughty aristocrats of Southern Palestine despised this peasantry. They scorned their poverty; their simplicity; their corrupted blood; their seeming irreligion. That Jesus was a Galilean was in their eyes a sufficient and conclusive condemnation of his claim to be the Messiah of the nation; while, for some reason unknown, Nazareth possessed throughout the country a particularly evil reputation. "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" was a proverb not only in Judea, but accepted apparently even in Galilee itself.‡

Jesus's education, whether at home or at school, was of the simplest kind. Many years before, Samuel had established the first seats of learning, the schools of the prophets. The ruins of these institutions still remained, in which the degenerate scribes were taught the theological dialectics of the time, and so, in the popular imagination, were prepared for the ministry of the Word. From them proceeded those traditions and ceremonial refinements against which Christ later brought the whole influence of his life and teaching to bear.§ These schools were mostly at Jerusalem. It is not certain that there were any in Galilee. It is certain Christ never attended them.‖ He never sympathized with the ritualism which they inculcated; and his parents possessed neither the means to give him an elaborate education, nor the learning which they could impart themselves.

But, in addition to these higher seminaries, there was a

* 1 Kings ix., 11. † Matt. xxvi., 73. ‡ John i., 46.
§ Stanley's Jew. Church, i., 442. Smith's Bib. Dict., art. Education, 493.
‖ John vii., 15.

parochial school in every village. Common-school education we have borrowed from Judaism, though we have improved the pattern. A far larger proportion of the people could read and write in Palestine in the days of Christ than in England in the days of Henry the Eighth. The unlearned fishermen by the Sea of Galilee were not absolutely illiterate. Few were the Jews who could not read their own Scriptures. In every synagogue was established an elementary school. Here a Rabbi gathered the children of the village, taught them to read and cipher, instructed them in their own national history and in the requirements of the law, catechized them in the Jewish Scriptures, afforded them some knowledge of the later commentaries which the scribes had founded thereon, and occasionally added some little instruction on such natural history and physical science as the imperfect knowledge of the day afforded.*

This parish pedagogue gave Christ his only schooling. Of Greek, Roman, and Oriental literature and philosophy he acquired no knowledge by any ordinary method of study. His mother, a devout and godly woman, taught him the Jewish Scriptures at home. The Jewish law required every parent to teach his children some trade. In compliance with this law, Jesus worked at his father's bench, learning his handicraft. He went with his parents to the village synagogue, where he would hear every Sabbath the law and the prophets read. Perhaps he would hear, too, some scribe expound them, not developing and applying their prophecies and sublime principles, but concealing them by puerile discussions concerning idle ceremonies and human traditions. Occasionally he went up with his parents to the Temple at Jerusalem on the Jewish feast-day; but this brief journey of sixty or seventy miles was the utmost extent of his travels.

One such visit is the only incident of his youth of which

* For an account of the educational facilities of Christ's day, see Kitto's Life of our Lord, p. 167; Kitto's Bib. Cyc., art. Schools; and Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. i., p. 60–62.

we have any authentic record. In connection with the Temple were rooms which were used by the Rabbis for higher seminaries of learning. Here they were accustomed to gather, and discuss the more difficult problems of their theological science. Jesus, though but twelve years of age, found the chief attractions of the Temple here. The magnificent courts, the imposing ritual, the solemn sacrificial service, the grand chorals from the trained choirs and accompanying orchestra, had for him no such fascination as these schools, where he might learn more fully the meaning of that law whose true meaning his village Rabbi was utterly unable to unfold to him. Leaving the crowded courts and the solemn festal service, he wandered off in search of these Temple schools, and here he was found after the feast was over and the people had dispersed, sitting in the midst of the doctors, listening to their exposition, and eagerly inquiring for some deeper and more spiritual truth than with all their learning they were able to afford him. They were astonished at the precocity of his understanding; and, if we may form any judgment of the catechizing he gave them from his later questioning, were no less puzzled than surprised.*

This little incident, which impressed itself strongly upon his mother's mind, gives us glimpse enough of his childhood to know that it was no ordinary one. He certainly had an eager appetite for religious truth. He exhibited, though in a vague and shadowy way, some consciousness of his character and his mission.† Increasingly he displayed that unconscious and natural grace in heart and in demeanor which in his ministry aided in drawing such crowds to listen to his words.‡ While untaught, save by his Father, God, through the lessons of nature and the inspirations of the Divine Spirit, he grew in stature, and in knowledge, and in favor with God and with man.

* Luke ii., 41–47. † Ibid., 49. ‡ Ibid., 52.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS.*

CHRIST was thirty years of age before he entered upon his public ministry. The universal expectation of a prince who should re-establish the throne of David and reinstate the ruined kingdom of Israel was then intensified by the appearance of a preacher of singular character and great power, who announced, with seeming authority, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." To understand the true character and career of Jesus, we must interrogate a little the herald who preceded him and proclaimed his coming.

A peculiar characteristic of the ancient Jewish Church was the prophets. Beginning with Moses,† and appearing singly in certain epochs of subsequent history, they were first organized as an order under Samuel, during the reigns of Saul and David.‡ Schools for their education were established by him.§ They became a numerous and influential class.

In the darkest days of the Church, Obadiah hid a hundred of them in a single cave.‖ In the reign of Jehoshaphat four hundred were gathered by the king for counsel.¶ They were the preachers, the poets, and the political teachers and counselors of Palestine. They were subject to no ecclesiastical superior, and were bound by no rules of discipline, and by no other creed than faith in God and acceptance of his Word.

* Matt. iii., 1–17; Mark i., 1–11; Luke iii., 1–23; John i., 15–34.
† Deut. xiii., 1–5; xviii., 15–22. ‡ 1 Chron. ix., 22; xxi., 9; xxv.
§ 1 Sam. xix., 20. Compare 2 Kings ii., 3, 5; iv., 38; vi., 1.
‖ 1 Kings xviii., 4. ¶ Ibid., xxii., 6.

THE JORDAN.

They were set apart to their office by no public ordination.* Whoever felt his soul burdened with a message of truth was ordained thereby to proclaim it. They were taken from ev-

* The only case of ordination mentioned is that in 1 Kings xix., 16.

ery tribe and every occupation. Women occasionally, though exceptionally, filled the sacred office. Miriam,* Deborah,† Huldah,‡ were among the prophets—the latter apparently at the head of the prophetic school in Jerusalem, and recognized by the court as the chief theologian of her time. David and Saul were prophet kings; Amos was a herdsman;§ Elijah, a Bedouin wanderer;‖ Elisha was called from the plow;¶ Isaiah and Jeremiah were, perhaps, children of prophets.** These preachers had neither church, pulpit, or salary; they gathered their congregations wherever they could find them—in the street, the field, the highways. They depended on the hospitality of the pious for their support.†† They wore a simple dress of sheepskin;‡‡ lived plainly; abstained from wine;§§ dwelt sometimes in Jerusalem in chambers of the Temple,‖‖ sometimes in the country in rude huts of their own construction.¶¶ They generally lived in companies of from twenty to thirty, and traveled through the country, couching their instruction in the form of poems, which they chanted to simple music, accompanying themselves on the rude instruments of their age.*** A few more leading spirits lived alone, either in the cities, as Isaiah and Jeremiah, or in the wilderness, as Elijah, preaching the truth, still generally in poetic forms, though not with musical accompaniment. While there were false prophets and time-servers among them, those whose addresses have been preserved were bold, courageous, heroic, patriotic, devout men, fearing God, and therefore not fearing men; denouncing alike the sins of the court,††† the corrup-

* Exod. xv., 20. † Judg. iv., 4.

‡ 2 Kings xxii., 14. § Amos i., 1.

‖ 1 Kings xvii., 1, and commentary on the statement there made that he was of Gilead, in Smith's Bible Dict., art. Elijah. ¶ 1 Kings xix., 19–21.

** Isa. i., 1; Jer. i., 1; Smith's Bible Dict., art. Isaiah and Jeremiah.

†† 1 Kings xvii., 8–16; 2 Kings iv., 8–10. ‡‡ Zech. xiii., 4; 2 Kings i., 8.

§§ 2 Kings iv., 38; Dan. i., 8, 12–16. ‖‖ Jer. xxxv., 4.

¶¶ 2 Kings vi., 1–5. *** 1 Sam., x., 5.

††† 1 Kings xviii., 18; 2 Sam. xii., 1–12. The books of the prophets are full of the boldest denunciations of the court, as Isa. x., 1–4; Jer. xxii., 1–9.

tions of the Church,* and the vices of the people.† The most frequent subject of their denunciations was a cold and heartless ceremonialism. The most popular theme of their discourses was the spirituality of true religion. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." This was the essence of their teaching.‡

Such a class could only live in the air of freedom. The destruction of the Jewish independence by the subjugation of the nation under Nebuchadnezzar resulted in the practical destruction of the prophetic order. A few, indeed, surviving that disaster, kept alive the faith and hope of the people during the captivity. The restoration of the state appeared at first to promise the restoration of the Church, with all its functions. But, little by little, the lustre of the ancient prophets dimmed; their voice ceased to echo among the hills of Palestine. Scribes, who united with the priestly party in the endeavor to substitute a religion of ritualism for one of practical godliness, gradually took their place. The manuscripts of some of the more prominent of the prophets were preserved, and read every Sabbath in the public service of the synagogue, but by men who did not appreciate their spirit, and could not, therefore, impart it to others. The reminiscence of this ancient order lingered only as a tradition of the ancient glory of the nation. The sudden reappearance, therefore, of a prophet startled all Palestine.

His birth, like that of Jesus, whose second cousin he was, was preceded by singular and supernatural indications of his future character and mission. He was consecrated from his infancy to the life of a Nazarite,§ the hermit of ancient Juda-

* Mal. i., 6–8. † Isa. v., 8–25.

‡ 1 Sam. xv., 22; Ps. li., 16, 17; Hosea vi., 6; Amos v., 21–24; Micah vi., 6–8; Isa. i., 14–17; lviii., 6; Ezek. xviii., 5–9, 20–28.

The reader who is familiar with Stanley's History of the Jewish Church will hardly need to be told that this summary of the characteristics of the prophetic order is taken largely from his xixth and xxth lectures.

§ Luke i., 15, and Rev. E. Hawkins thereon in Smith's Bible Dict., art.

ism. Both his parents belonged to the priestly order, but shared not the priestly vices.* He probably received from them an education for the priesthood. In this case he was taught the ancient Hebrew, and was thoroughly instructed in all the details of the Jewish ceremonial law. But he never performed priestly functions. At an early age, disgusted with the political and religious degeneracy of his times, he withdrew from Judea into the wilderness beyond Jordan. Here he lived a solitary life of prayer, of study of the Scripture, and of self-denial.† In this he was not alone. Others, like him, had sought refuge from the corruptions of the age in a hermit's life, and had gathered on the banks of the Jordan a few disciples of a misanthropic asceticism.‡ But their efforts at reform had been transitory and inefficacious.

From this seclusion John at length issued to proclaim to the people the truths which he had made his own by a prayerful study of the ancient prophets, whose successor he was.

His place and time were well chosen.

At a ford of the River Jordan, near its mouth, where the highway from the neighboring city of Jerusalem crosses this stream, he commenced his public ministry. The scene around was admirably consonant with the stern and gloomy character of the prophet and his teachings. The limestone hills, unsupplied with springs, lift up their barren and precipitous sides in solemn but sterile grandeur. A thin and unfruitful soil affords few fruits and but scanty pasturage. The Dead Sea, whose briny waters entomb the once fertile plains of Sodom and Gomorrah, afforded a significant type of the moral death of the once fair and prosperous Jewish nation, and of the complete destruction so soon to overwhelm it. It was the Sabbatic year.§ In accordance with the law of Moses, the land lay fallow. Agriculture was for the time forbidden.

John the Baptist. For an account of the vows of a Nazarite, see Numbers vi.

* Luke i., 5, 6. † Luke i., 80.

‡ See, for example, Josephus, Life of, § 2.

§ Andrew's Life of our Lord, p. 139.

Even spontaneous growths were left unreaped. The people, relieved from their customary toils, were easily accessible to religious instruction.*

The whole law of God was this year read to them in solemn assemblage.† Such occasions of rest were the prophet's harvestings. Of such the Baptist availed himself.

Doubtless a general discontent and a general expectancy of a coming deliverer prepared them for his message. Yet no ordinary man could have produced the impression he produced. He certainly was no ordinary man. His very appearance compelled attention. He wore a simple dress woven of camel's hair.‡ It was gathered about his loins with a leathern girdle. His food was as simple as his dress, and, like it, marked the ascetic. He neither ate bread nor drank wine. He lived on locusts and wild honey. The former, a kind of grasshopper, cooked in various ways, forms to the present day a staple article of food among the poorer peasantry. The latter is found in such abundance in the trunks of trees and the crevices of the rocks, that, to the ancient Israelite, the land was described as one flowing with honey. His hair was uncut, his beard untrimmed, his manners those of one little accustomed to the refinements of society.§

His preaching was as singular as his dress. He startled the people by the boldness of his denunciations. But, like his dress, it characterized the ascetic rather than the true reformer. He was strong, earnest, practical, but more powerful in a fiery assault on wrong than in tender and winning invitations to right. He aroused the conscience. He never attempted to awaken the affections. Christ closed his indignant denunciations of the Pharisees with the most touching and pathetic of appeals—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto

* Exod. xxiii., 10, 11; Lev. xxv., 2–7; Deut. xv. † Deut. xxxi., 10–13.

‡ "The garment of camel's hair was not the camel's skin with the hair on, which would be too heavy to wear, but raiment woven of camel's hair."—Alford on Matt. iii., 4. § Matt. iii., 4; Mark i., 6; and *supra*, p. 84, note §.

thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"* John the Baptist closed his similar scathing rebuke of the same party with solemn warning—"He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."† Yet, whether we test his preaching by its character or its effects, it was certainly remarkable. He scouted the idea that Jewish birth gave favor with God.‡ He denounced with vehemence the ceremonialism of the age. He demanded a pure morality as the evidence of godliness.§ To the tax-gatherer he preached integrity; to the soldiers, abstinence from violence; to all the people, practical benevolence.‖ If he did not mix with the people, he understood their life, and preached to it. Crowds flocked to hear him. All Judea felt the influence of his teaching. The people almost universally accepted him as a prophet. Some thought him the Messiah. Many of the lower classes were effectually reformed.¶

Both Pharisees and Sadducees endeavored at first to secure the prestige of his name by ranking themselves among his disciples.** Even a deputation of priests and levites was sent out by the Sanhedrim to obtain more accurate information as to his character and mission.††

But the effect of his preaching, if powerful, was also transient. The people, escaping from the magnetism of his presence, forgot the convictions of conscience he had produced.‡‡ The Pharisees, finding they could not use him, denied the authority of his mission, though they dared not deny his prophetic claim. He was not a builder, and, like all negative reformers, his work lacked permanence. He saw clearly the coming wrath of God,§§ but he knew not how to avert the storm which gathered darkly over his nation. He preached a religion of rigid asceticism and of pure morality. He sought

* Matt. xxiii., 37.
† Matt. iii., 12.
‡ Matt. iii., 9.
§ Matt. iii., 7, 8.
‖ Luke iii., 10–14.
¶ Luke iii., 15; Matt. xxi., 32.
** Matt. iii., 7.
†† John i., 19; Ellicott, Life of Christ, p. 115.
‡‡ See Luke vii., 32.
§§ Luke iii., 7.

to reform the state by returning to a strict allegiance to the principles of ancient Judaism. Jesus compared him to one who endeavored to mend an old garment by patching it with new cloth.* He did not perceive that the Mosaic institutions had fulfilled their purpose, and that the world needed new raiment. He prepared the way for the Gospel by unconsciously demonstrating the inefficacy of the law.

Standing aloof from the elaborate ritualism of his day, he employed one single and simple ceremony, which the Christian Church, borrowing from him, has continued to the present time. Those that signified their sorrow for sin and their purpose of reformation, he baptized in the River Jordan. Whether he dipped them in the water, or, descending with them into the stream, poured it upon their head, is a question which to the present day divides the most learned scholars of the Church into two theological parties.

Whichever form he used, the signification was the same—purification from the past, and consecration of the life for the future. This symbol was already in universal use in Oriental countries. Ablution was customary not only in Palestine, but in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as a preparation for prayer, and a token of expiation for sin. But it possessed a peculiar significance in Palestine, where every Gentile who entered the Jewish Church was baptized as a sign that he was washed of his past sins and errors, and entered, cleansed, a new life. John did not, therefore, invent the rite which has given him his name of the Baptist. He only employed it. And Christ, finding it already thus employed, and its significance understood, adopted it as the symbol of separation from the world and consecration unto him.

But first he signalized his adoption of the rite by being himself baptized.

It was winter. The early wheat was just beginning to clothe the earth with green when rumors of John's preaching reached the ears of Jesus in Nazareth.† He accepted the

* Matt. ix., 14–17.

† Ellicott's Life of Christ, p. 107, note 2.

fact as a sign that the time for his public ministry had come. He joined himself to the people that were already flocking in crowds to the River Jordan. He listened, unnoticed and unknown, to the preaching of his herald. He presented himself, one with the multitude, to be baptized by him.* But John recognized at once his cousin. Doubtless they had known each other in their youth; and though he knew not till later Jesus's sacred character and mission, he had already perceived his spiritual superiority. He objected to perform a rite which seemed to imply that he was himself in some way Jesus's superior. Reluctantly, and only after much persuasion, did he yield. The representative of the Old World, and the type and creator of the New, entered together the water. The people, impressed with a singular solemnity, watched this most sacred baptismal service of all time; while in the dove alighting on the head, and the voice from heaven proclaiming Jesus the divine Messiah, were visible and audible indications of the significance of the service.†

Why, indeed, one who confessed no sin, and therefore needed no repentance, should receive the baptism of repentance, has been a sore perplexity to many. It was to John. Jesus has himself solved the problem. He came to preach as the summation of all duty, "Follow thou me." Therefore it became him to submit to whatever ceremonies were proper and significant in the case of sinful humanity, and thus to fulfill all righteousness.

But in this significant act we recognize more than an example; we perceive a sublime symbol. In Jesus Christ the human race received its baptism. It laid off old faiths. It was introduced into a new life. In the sacred waters which had cleansed Naaman of his leprosy, humanity buried its dead past, and rose a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things passed then forever away. Henceforth all things were to be new.

* Luke iii., 21.

† Matt. iii., 13–17; Mark i., 9–11; Luke iii., 21–22.

The possible effect of John the Baptist's preaching on Jesus has been the subject of some bold surmises.* The effect of Jesus on John the Baptist's preaching is far more remarkable, though it has been less remarked. Before the baptism John denounced the vices of the people, and warned them of the judgments of God. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." This was the spirit of his preaching. But when an alarmed people cried out to him, "What shall we do, then?" he could only reply, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none." For the tremendous woe of sin he had no remedy to offer but the recommendation of an external reformation and a practical morality. But after Christ's baptism his preaching underwent a radical change.† He no longer denounced the vices of the people; he no longer warned of the wrath to come; he no longer addressed himself chiefly to fear and to conscience. He ceased to be a preacher of the law; he became a prophet of the Gospel. The Messiah, whom he had vaguely foretold, he pointed out in Jesus. The kingdom of grace, which was to be, he contrasted with the kingdom of law that had been.

Two of his testimonies concerning Jesus are especially significant. The first is his assertion of Christ's character. "I saw, and bore record, that this is the Son of God."‡ This declaration, which he often repeated, is capable of but one signification. It can bear no other interpretation than that which is afforded by the ancient prophets, who had declared that the Messiah should be "God with us;§ the Lord our righteousness;‖ the mighty God, the everlasting Father."¶

His declaration concerning Christ's mission is not less sig-

* See, for example, Renan's Life of Jesus, ch. v. and vi., p. 125, 126, 130–132; Schenckel's Character of Jesus, sec. ii., chap. iii., p. 69, and Furness's note thereon.

† Luke gives us a report of his preaching before the baptism (iii., 1–18); John after the baptism (i., 15–36). A comparison of these accounts shows a remarkable contrast.

‡ John i., 34. § Isa. vii., 14; Matt. i., 23.

‖ Jer. xxiii., 6. ¶ Isa. ix., 6.

nificant. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* This was a favorite metaphor with him. To understand it, we must remember that the whole Jewish worship was sacrificial. Every act of adoration, of thanksgiving, of confession, was expressed by a sacrifice. The lamb slain on the altar thus became the type of worship in the Jewish mind, the method of approach to God.†

But more than that. There was in the Jewish calendar one great national fast-day. It was called the Day of Atonement. On that day expiation was made for the sins of the nation. Two lambs or goats were selected, as near alike in size, form, and color as possible; they were brought to the Temple; the priest chose by lot between them; one of these was sacrificed upon the altar; upon the other was bound a piece of scarlet cloth, typical of the sins of the people. This goat was then led off into the wilderness, where he was set free, and seen no more. The significance of the whole service was unmistakable. By the death of the sacrifice the sins of the people were borne away and lost to sight forever; and since one lamb could not both carry them away and be slain on the altar, two were taken to typify the one truth.‡

It is scarcely possible but that this symbolical service was in the mind both of the preacher and the people when he uttered the sermon whose substance has been condensed into a single significant sentence. It was probably preached in the fall, and about the time of the Day of Atonement. "God," said he, "has provided a Lamb. By the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son God will fulfill the prophecies of the Temple

* John i., 29, 36.

† The explanation of John's declaration offered by the author of Ecce Homo (p. 12), who refers it chiefly to the quiet and peaceful disposition of Jesus, while it might serve to interpret the first part of the sentence, "Behold the Lamb of God," certainly does not adequately interpret the rest, "which taketh away the sins of the world."

‡ For an account of this service, see Lev. xvi. For an able tracing of its typical meaning, see Bonar's commentary thereon; also Smith's Bib. Dic., and M'Clintock and Strong's Bib. Cyc., art. Atonement, Day of.

service. Upon him he will lay the iniquities of us all, and they will be borne away and felt no more."

John does not seem, however, to have preached these sermons until after Christ's return from the temptation in the wilderness. To the record of that singular, and, in some respects, inexplicable experience, we now turn.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEMPTATION.

IN attempting to form a conception of Christ's experience of temptation in the wilderness, so graphically but dramatically described by the evangelists, we are met at the outset by an almost insuperable difficulty. It is impossible for us to conceive of God as tempted with evil—of the Infinite as struggling with the powers of darkness. We can portray to our own thoughts the temptation of Jesus only as a human experience. But this is only part of the greater mystery of the Incarnation. The whole life of Christ is intensely and characteristically human; and this attests its verity. No imaginary conception of an incarnate Son of God would have presented him as hungering, suffering, weeping, struggling with temptation—finally dying. Yet so the Gospels depict him. The humiliation of Jesus is his glory. Nor do we fully conceive that humiliation until we comprehend that he not only took upon him the external conditions of humanity, but entered into experiences of heart-conflict only to be interpreted to us by our own. In endeavoring, then, to conceive of this mysterious struggle, let us frankly confess our inability to fathom the deeper secrets of Christ's divine nature, and content ourselves with depicting his experience as that of one who was tempted in all points like as we are, save without sin.

Jesus, then, had long pondered upon the wretched condition, not only of his nation, but of the whole world. Heavier and heavier its woes had pressed upon his heart. The solitudes of Galilee had afforded him time for thought. His occasional visits to Jerusalem had afforded him food for thought.

* Matt. iv., 1–11; Mark i., 12, 13; Luke iv., 1–13.

He felt, too, that he was the promised and long-expected Messiah. When the full consciousness of his divine mission and power possessed him can only be a matter of surmise. Some have thought he was first revealed to himself at his baptism. Others have thought his answer to his mother in the Temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" indicates that he possessed such a consciousness then. It is certainly difficult to conceive that, as an infant in the cradle, he had a full comprehension of his character and his career. Is it not possible that this comprehension gradually dawned upon him? Power is not always conscious power. Among men, genius sometimes bursts suddenly into full bloom as a primrose at twilight. More often it unfolds gradually and unconsciously, little by little the soul learning what endowments God has given it—what work allotted it. So it may have been with Jesus. His divinity may have dawned upon him as gradually as it has upon the world. He who *grew* in favor with God and man may have grown in his own consciousness of character as well.

However this may be, the time had now come when his divine consciousness was to assert itself in action. Jesus felt that the time of his disclosure was at hand. He accepted the voice of one crying in the wilderness as a summons to the battle. From the comparative solitudes of Galilee he emerged for the moment, only to plunge into the absolute solitude of the wilderness; perhaps the wild region of country between Jericho and Jerusalem; perhaps the desolate and inhospitable wild beyond the Jordan. From the baptism by John, in which he had publicly consecrated himself to the service of God and humanity, he retired to this wilderness to perfect himself for his life-battle by a preparatory conflict. Here, in prayer and fasting, he studied the problem of his life.

Others had felt with anguish the degeneracy of their nation. They had taken up the sword to secure its independence. Bravely, but in vain, the Maccabees had sought by revolution to restore the ancient theocracy. Christ's more

comprehensive heart felt a heavier woe. He saw, as in a vision, the universal corruption of mankind. He perceived that institutions are the outgrowths of individual life, and that this must be changed if they are to be permanently reformed. He traced all the social and political degeneracy of his times to its source—a heart alienated from God and given up to selfishness. The truths which he later preached orbed themselves before him. He saw that men must be born again. He saw that a world living without God and having no hope must be inspired with hope by being brought back to God. He saw that humanity waited for a new revelation of Jehovah, not as the king, but as the Father of mankind. He saw that love, and that the love of God, was the only lever which could lift the world out of its slough of despond. He saw that words could never adequately portray that love; that only a life of patience and a death of suffering could do it. He foresaw, keenest anguish of all, that even from such a truth so portrayed many would turn away, deaf, blind, dead.

Gradually his life unfolded itself in a solemn indistinctness before him. He perceived—it needed no prophet's eye to do that—the inevitable conflict which he must court with the Pharisaic party. He perceived himself disowned by the Church he came to redeem. He perceived the people alternating between an ignorant enthusiasm when they understood not his purposes, and an ungovernable rage when they did. He perceived himself left to the companionship of a few uncultured and uncongenial peasants culled from his Galilean home. He perceived that the course of his life must be one of suffering and seeming insignificance, its end an apparently ignominious disaster and defeat. He stood in imagination in Caiaphas's court, the subject of its mock pretense of trial. He stood in Pilate's court, and felt the hot breath of the rabble on his brow, and heard their loud outcries for his death. The Garden of Gethsemane cast its dark shadow on his path. The cross loomed up, sombre and bloody, before him. The exultant Pharisees, the downcast disciples, his mother, with her

pierced and broken heart, all stood before him; for he perceived that he must needs invite all whom he loved to the banquet of suffering which he was preparing for himself. A deeper sorrow overshadowed him as the darkness of the whole earth closed about him, the sins of the whole world rested on him, and a dim vision of the hour when God would seem to have forsaken, utterly appalled him.

And was this to be his career? Must he cast away all bright hopes and brilliant earthly prospects of budding manhood? Must he cage and curb his impatient spirit? Must he turn away from all ordinary avenues of usefulness? Must he content himself with simplest instruction to the simple peasantry? Must he not only crucify himself, but lay the cross on all who loved and sought to follow him? From such a prospect, all the native pride, the delicate sensitiveness, the tender affections of his human nature arose in strong rebellion. He could neither eat nor sleep. For forty days and nights he ate, if not absolutely nothing, at least nothing save an occasional carob plucked from the forest trees, or a mouthful of wild honey gathered from the rocks.

Then, wearied and weakened, he entered on that mysterious experience through which all his disciples have ever followed him, and which Bunyan has so graphically depicted in the passage of Christian through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Evil spirits seemed to surround him, and whispered suggestions of recreancy, added to the tumultuous experiences of the dark and mystic hour.

Whether Satan really appeared to Jesus in bodily form has always been a matter of serious dispute among Christian men. On the one hand, it is said that nowhere else is he depicted as assuming a visible form; that his power lies in his concealment; that it is because the Christian has to fight, not against flesh and blood, but against the unseen prince of the power of the air, that he is commended to put on the whole armor of God;* that a revealed and incarnate devil would,

* Ephes. vi., 12, 13.

by disclosing himself, defeat his purpose; that it would need no wondrous courage, no remarkable virtue to resist such a tempter; that the language of the Scripture narrative is to be interpreted by the common usages and beliefs of the time; that, in narrating the experience afterward to his disciples, Jesus used that language and confirmed that belief by asserting that an evil spirit instigated the thoughts which tried his soul; and that this really signifies nothing more than that they were presented *to* him by influences from without, not harbored *by* him by the spirit within. On the other hand, it is said that no believer in the Scripture can doubt the existence of evil spirits, who really exert at times an influence on the hearts and lives of men; that belief in such demons is the almost universal belief of the human race; that it is no incredible thing that at certain times and under peculiar circumstances they may assume visible form, as certainly the angels are stated to have done;* that perhaps Martin Luther was not mistaken when he thought he saw the devil; that the exalted condition of Christ's faculties, and the unnatural condition of his body, may have enabled him to see the invisible world; and that a philosophy which interprets away the plain and simple assertion that "the tempter came to him," and the "devil taketh him," is to be received and regarded with great suspicion.

This controversy never has been settled, and probably never will be. It is essential to the proper comprehension of this narrative that we should understand that an evil spirit really assailed Jesus; that the suggestions of recreancy did not spring spontaneous in his heart from evil desires which lurked unrecognized there, but that they were whispered to him by the tempter only to be instantly and indignantly rejected. But whether this tempter was embodied or unseen it does not seem important for us to know. The substantial significance of the scene is the same, whichever interpreta-

* Matt. i., 20, 21; Luke i., 28–30; Matt. xxviii., 2–7; Dan. viii., 16, 17.

tion of its external aspects is accepted; and it is that spiritual significance alone which we wish to consider.*

Temptations most frequently present themselves first in forms seemingly innocent. So it was with Jesus. Exhausted nature reasserted her long-denied claims. Christ was an hungered. The body, no longer subject to the supremacy of the spirit, demanded food. Jesus was far from human habitations. The few wild fruits of the desolate wilderness were utterly inadequate to supply his needs. But already he felt within himself the mysterious endowment of miraculous power. A word from him, and the stone beneath his feet would be bread in his hand. Should he speak it, and save himself from perishing from hunger? Why, rather, should he not?

He had come to live the life of man among men. He not only took upon himself the form of a servant, he was made in the condition† of man. To employ his supernatural power for his own sustenance was to destroy the significance of his mission at the outset. That miraculous power he would not exert for himself. They that taunted him on the cross, "He saved others, himself he can not save," bore an unconscious testimony to the unselfishness of his spirit, and the thoroughness with which he took upon himself the life of common humanity. He that fed five thousand in the wilderness from two small loaves and five little fishes would not supply himself, except by ordinary means, with one.

A subtler temptation assailed him. "Go," so the whispered suggestion was uttered to his soul, "go to Jerusalem; assert your Messiahship; invite an expectant people to acknowledge you their king; demonstrate your claim by a mir-

* It would take us far beyond our limits to attempt to describe the various theories which have clustered about this temptation, from those which treat the story altogether as an allegory, to those which literalize it by the singular hypothesis that Satan appeared in the form of one of the delegation from the Sanhedrim, who had come up from Jerusalem to inquire into John's preaching, and who seized this opportunity to attempt to gain Christ over to the priestly party! See the various theories concisely stated in Lange's Commentary on Matthew iv., 3.

† Phil. ii., 8. Greek, *σχηματι ευρεθεις ως ανθρωπος.*

acle wrought in the presence of the multitude; cast yourself down, unhurt, from the pinnacle of the Temple; so, by one bold master-stroke, assert your right, and secure from a wondering nation their allegiance, while your own doubts of your divine authority and mission shall be thus effectually settled forever."

No! Not thus can Jesus's mission be accomplished; not the wonder of the people, but their love, he has come to awaken; not to be enthroned in their palaces, but in their hearts; not by a miracle that appeals to their senses, but by a miracle of love and mercy, must he conquer his kingdom. Sublime is the work which he has undertaken. Long, slow, weary, is the path which he must traverse in accomplishing it. And if his own mind is sometimes darkened by doubts—if the consciousness of his divinity burns not yet clear in his own bosom—if the whispered skepticism, "If thou be the Son of God," finds momentary lodgment there, this is not the way to banish it. Not by a trial of his supernatural powers, but by the longer, harder trial of his patience and his love, will he attest his Messiahship alike to himself and to mankind.

Once more the tempter assails him. "The Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and saith unto him, 'All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'"

It is impossible to interpret this literally. It is impossible to suppose that from any mountain Jesus could gain a view of all the kingdoms of the world. It is impossible but that Jesus should have known the devil was promising what he could not perform. It is impossible that the suggestion of literal worship to a bodily fiend could offer any temptation—we will not say to Jesus—to any one of ordinary purity of heart and strength of conscience. In the entire narration of the Gospel biographies, we have in graphic form the outlines only of a picture—mere touches, that indicate an experience which can only thus be portrayed. This last temptation was

subtlest, and, therefore, most dangerous of all. Let the reader in imagination conceive of Jesus, for the moment, unendowed with the divine strength which belonged to the Son of God; let him conceive for a moment the issue as it might have presented itself to a young man full of the buoyant hope, and fire of zeal, and enthusiasm of imagination of ardent youth; thus he may best conceive what the temptation would have been to the humanity in Christ.

In the midst of a ruined world, then, stands Jesus, the mournful spectator of its woes. His pure soul is disgusted by the heartless ritualism of a degenerate religion. His patriotism is wounded and grieved by his nation's present decay and impending doom. He feels the weight of the Roman yoke. He shudders at the impiety of the Roman polytheism. He loathes and detests the odious oppression which is wearing out the life of his people. He has felt himself irresistibly called to be the ransom, first of his own nation, then of all the oppressed nationalities of the earth. He has purposed within himself to found a kingdom whose law shall be liberty, whose fruit shall be peace.

He recognizes that in the Jewish nation and in the Jewish religion are the elements out of which this kingdom is to be constructed. The Jews possess the fundamental principles of the true state. They possess the knowledge of the true God. Salvation is of the Jews. Christianity is to grow out of the ruins of Judaism, as the rose of spring is the resurrection of the faded leaves that lie at its roots and nourish its life. He comes, not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill. He finds about him the remnants of the ancient Church; the descendants of the authorized priesthood; the degenerate scions of the lost prophetic order. He finds a religious party, expectant of a Messiah, anxious for a Messiah, and ready to cast the whole weight of their prestige and influence in with any one who gives promise of restoring to the nation its ancient glory, and will suffer them to be sharers in it. For the establishment of such a kingdom Christ had

many advantages. He had the grace which attracts men, the eloquence which arouses, the courage which inspirits. If he would but ally himself with the Church party; if he would but pass by unexposed their veneer of virtue; if he would put himself at their head; if he would, in short, study how to maintain and increase his influence among the influential, the kingdom of Judea might be his. He might realize the dream which Herod had sought in vain to realize. He might re-establish the throne of David; reinstate the sceptre of Shiloh; reform the degenerate worship; restore the prophetic order; reordain a holy priesthood. A picture of a nation long enslaved, now disenthralled, redeemed, restored, reformed, purified by his power—this is the picture the wily tempter presents to his imagination.

Nor this alone. Alexander, going forth from the little kingdom of Macedon, had vanquished the world. Already Greece had lost its vitality; already the power of Rome was passing away, though its apparent dominion was at its height. To a devoutly enkindled imagination it would not seem impossible that the conditions of the present might be reversed in the future. The kingdoms of the earth might yet be made subject to a redeemed and ransomed Israel. The Jewish people expected it. The prophets seemed to most of their readers to promise it. The kingdoms of the earth and all their glory were seen as in a vision. And the seductive promise was whispered in the ear of Jesus, "This victory shall be thine. Only yield something of your religious zeal; only consent to join hands with the priestly aristocracy of Judea; only consent to look in silence on their sins; only compromise a little with conscience; only employ the arts of policy and the methods of state diplomacy, by which, always and every where, men mount to power. Be not righteous overmuch, for why shouldst thou destroy thyself?"

Something such was the picture Satan drew. It disclosed the artist; it ended the conflict. The issue was plain. Between a life of self-sacrifice, ending in a shameful death, and

a career of self-seeking ambition, there was no alternative. In choosing there was no hesitation. Instantly and indignantly Jesus repels the suggestion. It finds no lodgment in his heart. "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,'" is his decisive answer. It is not difficult to conceive with what power of eloquence, inspired by that moment, Christ later preached, "Ye can not serve God and mammon."

The battle was fought. The victory gained by Satan in the Garden of Eden was wrested from him in the wilderness. The cross, with all its shame and suffering, with all its bright but unseen glory too, was chosen. And from the dark valley, where evil spirits hover, and dark suggestions of sin fill the reluctant ear and torment the oppressed spirit, Jesus emerged into an experience of light, while angels came to minister unto him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MIRACLE AT THE MARRIAGE.*

WHILE Jesus was thus preparing himself for his mission, John the Baptist was preparing the people for the Messiah's coming. Among those who had flocked from the various parts of Palestine to attend John's preaching were four friends from the village of Bethsaida, in Galilee. They were simple-minded peasants, indifferent, as the common people usually are, to the refined subtleties of the schools, but not unacquainted with the Scriptures, and all the more ready to receive the Messiah there promised, because their minds and hearts were not preoccupied by a system which was at once Christless and soulless. Jesus's air and bearing impressed them powerfully. They left John, attached themselves to this new Rabbi, and followed him back to their Galilean home. At Cana a fifth was added to their number. Their names were John, Andrew, Simon, surnamed Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, more usually designated by his father's name as the son of Tholmai.†

They can hardly be said, however, to have become as yet Christ's disciples. They were not organized as a school. They appear not to have abandoned their original employments till some time later. They certainly did not comprehend Christ's mission, and but vaguely his character; but they were drawn to him by a strong personal attraction. He impressed himself upon them by that mysterious power

* John i., 35–51; ii., 1–11.

† Bartholomew. For a good statement of the arguments for the identity of Bartholomew and Nathanael, see Trench's Studies of the Gospel, p. 81.

which, in a less degree, the richly-endowed of God, whom we call geniuses, often possess. Throughout his life Jesus was more than his teaching. He drew men to him far more by personal qualities than by the popularity of his doctrine. To love him was more than to accept his instructions. Thus these five were first friends, afterward disciples, and in loving hearts accepted Jesus before they comprehended either his character or his work.

The little village of Cana is situated in the hill-country of Galilee, about nine miles north of Nazareth.* Here Jesus found an invitation awaiting him to a wedding. It is possible that it may have been extended to him through the influence of these new friends. There is a legend that John was the bridegroom; at all events, these disciples, as well as Jesus, were among the guests.

In that age of ritualism the wedding was a far more elaborate ceremony than with us. The espousal was itself ordinarily celebrated by significant ceremonials. There were no secret engagements. The parties were publicly betrothed. In the eye of the law they were thenceforth considered as one. The property of the wife passed to her expected husband. Still, the bride and groom rarely met. All communications were ordinarily had through a friend, termed the "friend of the bridegroom." The espoused wife continued to live with her father at home. At length the hour set apart for the wedding arrived. At night the groom set out for his bride's home; friends accompanied him; a band of music attended the procession. The bride and her friends waited his coming; their lamps trimmed and burning, and they as those that wait for their Lord. At length, about midnight, the sound of music was heard; the whisper ran round the expectant circle—Lo! the bridegroom cometh; let us go

* There is some uncertainty as to the site; but there is little doubt that this is the true location. See Robinson's Researches, iii., sec. xiv., p. 204. Ritter's Sacred Geogr., iv., 378-380; Thomson's Land and Book, vol. ii., p. 121, 122. Contra Hepworth Dixon's Holy Land, vol. i., p. 264, note.

forth to meet him. The bride, closely veiled, accompanied by her maidens, received the groom. The combined procession then marched back again, preceded by flaming torches, to the house of the bridegroom. The streets of the little village resounded with music, laughter, hilarity. Boys accompanied it, shouting; women flocked to the windows to scan the features of the groom and the dress of the bride. The service possessed the same singular fascination, especially over woman's heart, that it always has and always will. Arriving at the bridegroom's house, they found an elaborate feast prepared for the entire party; this feast constituted the only marriage ceremony; it was enlivened by music, dancing, and various games. The festivities lasted several days, sometimes an entire fortnight. If there were any religious services, they were subordinate to these festivities. All went merry as a marriage bell.*

Human nature was much the same then as now. These feasts were not always conducted with decorum. They were, at times, the scenes of revelry and intemperate indulgence. Such disorders characterized, perhaps, the Greek and Roman feasts more frequently than those of Judea; yet the latter were not always free from them.† The feast, at least in Greece, ended with a symposium—a drinking banquet, in which the wine passed from hand to hand, each pledging his neighbor, and all uniting in pledges to the bride and groom. The former was still closely veiled. It is said that she did not customarily raise her veil till the end of the feast closed the marriage service. It might even happen that the husband did not see his wife's face after the espousal till he saw it in the bridal chamber. Thus Jacob was cheated of his choice, and, having served seven years for Rachel, had Leah palmed off upon him by Laban, who, being a shrewd match-

* The following passages of Scripture may be referred to as illustrating these features of the wedding feast: Gen. xxix., 22; Judges xiv., 1, 2, 10; Matt. xxii., 1–14; Isa. lxi., 10; John iii., 29; Matt. ix., 15; xxv., 1–13.

† See page 108, and notes there.

maker, thought the opportunity to be rid of both his daughters too good to be foregone.*

It was to such a scene Christ now repaired, but a few days after the temptation in the wilderness. The transition was strange. Life, especially ministerial life, is full of strangely intermixed light and shade. From the wilderness to the marriage feast—from the wild, where he hungered for a single loaf of bread, to the banquet-hall—from the lonely struggle with Satan to the merry songs and jests of many friends: so we pass with shifting of the scenes, swifter and more marvelous than any drama.

Who were the married pair we do not know. They were friends of Jesus. They were probably relatives. His mother seems to have exercised authority. She directed the servants as though mistress of the house rather than guest, and they unquestioningly obeyed her. The family probably belonged to the middle class in society, for Christ had few friends among the rich. The guests, moreover, were too numerous for their host's means. The wine gave out early in the feast, and Mary, who was concerned by it as no mere guest could well have been, appealed to Jesus for counsel or for help. "They have no wine," said she.

Christ's answer is somewhat obscure. It has been very generally thought to convey a reproof to the mother for her implied request for a miracle. It certainly seems to give no promise of assistance. "What is that to us?†" he said. Perhaps in the tone there was somewhat which the words fail to convey. She, at all events, perceived in it some encouragement, and told the servants to do whatever her son bade them. Meantime the feast went merrily on. The master of ceremonies did not even know that the supply had failed.

* See Gen. xxix.

† Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί may be translated either as above or as in our English version. The former seems better to agree with the context (so Adam Clarke, Notes in loco); the latter with other parallel passages in Scripture. See Judges xi., 12; 1 Kings xvii., 18; 2 Kings iii., 13, in Septuagint. So Alford, Trench, Olshausen, Bloomfield.

The Jewish dining-room usually opens upon the court-yard, which constitutes the centre of the better class of Jewish houses. In this court there were set six jars for water. They were about two thirds the size of an ordinary barrel. They contained twenty gallons each. "Fill up the jars with water," is Christ's direction. It is done. "Bear now to the governor of the feast." The astonished servants obey. This by-play passes unobserved. The master of the feast tries the new draught that is set before him. The water has become wine. Surprised at its flavor and its quality, he exclaims to the bridegroom, "Every man, at the beginning, doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

In this simple narrative there seems at first nothing, save the mere fact of a miracle, at all surprising. That a young man should attend the wedding of a friend, and contribute to the sources of its enjoyment by giving some wine for the occasion, is not remarkable, especially as it was customary for invited guests to bring with them contributions to the feast. But Christian faith sees in this incident much more. That the Son of God should commence his earthly career by attending a marriage feast, and perform his first miracle for the purpose of prolonging its festivities, possesses a marked moral significance. The simple fact that Jesus made wine at all has been a perplexity to many good men, and a cause of gratulation to some evil ones. Men that quote no other act of Jesus never tire of quoting this. Men that follow him in nothing else, accept him as their example here. The fact is regarded as the all-sufficient argument for the modern liquor-traffic. A modern liquor-dealer's association is said to have adopted as their seal a picture of Christ turning water into wine at Cana of Galilee.

The perplexity of Christ's true disciples is increased when this isolated fact is coupled with a consideration of his habitual practice. It certainly was not that of total abstinence. Wine had been in use from the days when Noah's sons cov-

ered the shame of their father's drunkenness. Intemperance was as common, though not as universal a vice as now. Moses had forbidden the priesthood to taste of wine during the Temple service.* Solomon had found occasion to warn against the intoxicating cup.† Daniel had protested against it by eating pulse and drinking water.‡ The stories of Ahasuerus and of Belshazzar are sufficient illustrations that intoxication was a royal as well as a common sin in the East.§ We know that it was increasingly common in Greece and Rome. A few years after Christ turned water into wine at Cana, Paul had to admonish the young Church at Corinth for converting the Lord's Supper into a drinking bout.‖ The parable of the prodigal son is itself a sufficient witness that dissipation is not exclusively a modern vice.¶ Yet Jesus would seem neither to have practiced total abstinence himself, nor to have inculcated it as a duty binding on his immediate followers. On the contrary, he initiated his life by a miraculous making of wine. He attended without hesitation the feasts where it was used. He habitually partook of it. The common argument from example did not dissuade him. He suffered himself to be called a wine-bibber and a glutton; and, dying, he left, as his last legacy to the Church, a ceremonial which is inseparably identified with the drinking of wine as a symbol of participation in the benefits of his blood. Such are the first aspects of his life, and the witness of his example on this subject.

It does not follow, however, from these facts, that by his example or his silence Christ encourages the drinking customs of modern society, or the manufacture and sale of modern alcoholic liquors. To argue the temperance question is not within our province in these pages, yet two facts are to be borne in mind in considering the meaning of Christ's

* Lev. x., 8–11; Ezek. xliv., 21.
† Prov. xxiii., 29–32.
‡ Dan. i., 8, 12.
§ Esth. i., 10; Dan. v., 2, 4.
‖ 1 Cor. xi., 21, 22.
¶ Compare, also, such passages as Isaiah v., 22; xxviii., 7; Hos. iv, 11; Rom. xiii., 13; Gal. v., 21; 1 Pet. iv., 3.

example. And that example it is our province to elucidate.

In the first place, it is to be remembered that the wines of Palestine and those in ordinary use in America are unlike only in name. Of the former there were three kinds. First, there was fermented wine. It contained what is the only objectionable element in modern wines, a percentage of alcohol. It was the least common, and the percentage of alcohol was small. Distilled liquors were almost, if not utterly unknown. Second were the new wines. These, like our new cider, were wholly without alcohol, and were not intoxicating. They were easily preserved in this condition for several months. Third were wines in which, by boiling or by drugs, the process of fermentation was prevented and alcohol excluded. These, answering somewhat in composition and character to our raspberry shrub, were mixed with water, and constituted the most common drink of the land.*

Now there is no evidence to indicate which of these wines was in use at this festival, nor which kind Jesus made. There is nothing to indicate that he ever partook of any alcoholic liquors, nor, on the other hand, is there any thing to indicate the reverse. History is absolutely silent on this point. The statement that any historic character was fond of cider would leave it matter of mere conjecture whether it was sweet or hard cider that he liked. The statement that Jesus turned water into wine leaves it wholly matter of conjecture whether it was new, sweet, or fermented wine he made.†

* That this statement should be seriously denied, and an attempt made to prove that the process of fermentation can not be stopped (see D. R. Thomason's little tract on "Teetotalism as a Rule of Duty unknown to the Bible," p. 31–37), only indicates the length to which men are sometimes carried in the heat of argument. For a full and impartial account of the wines of the Oriental and classical world, and a description of the processes employed to prevent fermentation, see Smith's Dict. of Antiq., art. Vinum, and Smith's Bib. Dict., art. Wine.

† It is indeed said that the statement made by the ruler of the feast indicates that it was alcoholic wine Jesus made. That verse is paraphrased as follows: "Every man, at the beginning, doth set forth good wine" (*i. e.*, strong

In the second place, it is to be remembered that the life and teachings of Christ were for all time and for all communities, while the total abstinence question is largely local and temporary. It is certainly unquestionable that fermentation is a process of nature as much as growth, and alcohol a gift of God as truly as the fruits of the earth. It does not follow, in our day and country, with all the evils which flow from social drinking and the liquor traffic, that they are to be sanctioned and maintained. It is unquestionable that the customary use of fermented liquors as a beverage in excited and over-stimulated America is accompanied by evils of the most serious and terrible character, which seem to be inseparable therefrom. It does not follow that the world will never be self-restrained enough to use them. The wine-drinking which is hazardous in our age and place may be safe in another. The world in its childhood must forego some things which in its manhood it may use. It may at least be wise, if it be not duty, to leave untouched to-day what in the riper life of to-morrow we may employ with safety.

To these considerations may be added a third. Christ did not undertake the immediate reformation of any specific evils. He found his nation groaning under the intolerable servitude of a foreign despotism. Yet he counseled paying tribute to Cæsar. He found a Church from whose ceremonials a corrupt priesthood had taken all true life. Yet he at-

liquor); "and when men have well drunk" (*i. e.*, are thoroughly intoxicated), "then that which is worse" (*i. e.*, weaker); "but thou hast kept the good wine until now." But Mr. Barnes has shown (see his notes, *in loco*) that in the ancient world wine was rightly regarded best which was least intoxicating. And though doubtless the primary signification of the Greek word μεθυσθωσι is "to be intoxicated," Bloomfield has shown (see his notes, *in loco*) that it does not always bear this signification either in classic or Scripture usage. And certainly an interpretation which assumes that drunkenness was so common a vice that the host was accustomed to reckon on the intoxication of his guests in making his provision for them, is intrinsically incredible, and does not consort with what we know of life in the East at that time. We accept, therefore, the English version as accurate in representing, not intoxication, but a certain palling of the palate, as the reason for putting the poor wine last.

tended its customary festivals and services, and complied with most, if not all of its observances. He found the scribes and Pharisees the accepted teachers of the people, against whose lifeless and selfish formalism he constantly counseled them. Yet he bade his disciples do all that they commanded, because they sat in Moses's seat. He found slavery an accepted institution of the entire civilized world. He proclaimed no emancipation, and his immediate apostles, acting under his inspiration, commended to the slaves contentment and obedience. He found intemperance a customary vice. That he made no direct effort to eradicate it is only in accordance with his general principles and practice. He was neither political, ecclesiastical, social, nor temperance reformer, but all, and more than all. He undertook a broader work than either—the evolution of moral forces which should liberate the race from all servitude, present the Church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, thoroughly purge and purify society, and redeem the individual from all fleshly dominion. From this mission he would not turn aside for any specific reform, however important it might be.

We conclude, then, that Jesus, by his life and teachings, does not directly solve the temperance, rather let us say the total abstinence problem; and that the question of use or abstinence of wines is to be settled by no particular precepts or plain example, but by the application of the general principles Jesus inculcated to the facts and circumstances of modern society.

If, however, this incident throws no clear light on the temperance controversy, it is full of significance upon another and no less important matter. Jesus had just been baptized by John. He had just emerged from forty days of hermitage in the wilderness. He had for his first disciples four who were attendants on the Baptist's preaching. He seemed to be following in his forerunner's footsteps. It was important that he should mark at the outset the difference between the liberty of his Gospel and the bondage of John's asceticism.

The marriage at Cana did this more powerfully than any sermon, and inaugurated a life as different in spirit from that of his cousin as his cousin's was from that of the Pharisaic religion of the day. John ate locusts and wild honey; Jesus began his career at a marriage feast. John never drank wine; Jesus made it by a miracle. John never accepted an invitation to a social gathering; Jesus never declined one. John lived in the wilderness; Jesus traversed Palestine from its southern capital to its northern border, mingling with the people, entering their houses, sharing in their feasts, joining in their sports, preaching in their synagogues, living as a man among men, but every where carrying with him truth, purity, love, and by his own life teaching how to live.*

It has been said that Jesus wept, but never laughed. The whole spirit of his life refutes this assumption. His sociality was one of the most notable features of his character. Worldly and irreligious men were drawn to him. Prejudices of caste, of blood, and of religion disappeared in the warm sunshine of his presence. Jew as he was, the Samaritans made him their guest. Galilean and Nazarite as he was, he was the invited guest alike of publican and of Pharisee. Some of his most valued instructions were given at feasts made in his honor. He declares of himself that he came eating and drinking. And so characteristic was the joyous geniality of his life, that the Pharisees, who wore their faces as long as their garments, and could understand no purity but that of pride and seclusion, stigmatized him as a friend of publicans and sinners, in which they unconsciously told the truth, and as a glutton and wine-bibber, in which they intentionally lied. His whole career is a perfect illustration of the precept of his apostle, "Use this world as not abusing it."† To such a life the miracle at the marriage was a fitting prelude.

Jesus was now, then, ready to commence his labors. He had pondered long his mission and formed his purpose. He had, by his baptism, publicly consecrated himself to his work.

* See Matt. xi., 16–19.

† 1 Cor. vii., 31.

He had, by his struggle with Satan, prepared himself for the more bitter struggle of his life and death. In the four friends who followed him he had gathered the nucleus of his future Church. In the miracle at the marriage he had signified the joyous freedom of the Gospel he had come to preach. But his public ministry could not be inaugurated in a corner. He would not begin it in Galilee. In the city that had slain the prophets, and that, slaying him, was to perish in his death; as the temple of Dagon in the death-throes of Samson, he must first proclaim his mission by an audacious challenge to the corrupt priesthood whose office-work was at an end, and whose place he was about to fill by a universal priesthood holy unto God.

It was the time of the Passover. Taking John with him* as his companion, he journeyed to Jerusalem.

* It is certain, from the whole tenor of John's Gospel, that he was with Jesus during this first visit to Jerusalem. There is nothing but John iv., 1, to indicate that the other disciples were, and they may have joined him at the Jordan.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REFINER'S FIRE.*

TO the ancient Jew Mount Moriah was the most sacred spot in the Holy Land. Here, where eighteen hundred years before the birth of Christ Abraham had gone to offer his son Isaac,† and in sight of the holy hill where the Son of God was to be offered a sacrifice for sin, Solomon had built the Temple, the sacred edifice of the Jews.‡ About it clustered all their religious associations. Here the ark of God found a resting-place after its long wanderings in the wilderness.§ Here the law was kept, the legacy which Moses had left to the nation which he founded. Here the whole sacrificial system of the Jewish worship centred. Here was the home of the priests. In rooms connected with this building, prophets and holy men and women lived, who consecrated their lives to prayer and praise.‖ Hither the people resorted thrice a year to offer their sacrifices of penitence, of consecration, and of thanksgiving.¶ Hither every mother brought her first-born son, that she might redeem him from the Lord.** Here the Sanhedrim gathered for many of their most important deliberations; for

* John ii., 13–25; iii., 1–21.

† Gen. xxii.; Josephus, Antiq., i., 13, § 2; vii., 13, § 4. The tradition which locates Abraham's act upon this mountain is denied by Stanley (Sinai and Palestine, ch. v., note, § 2, p. 247), Geo. Grove (Smith's Bib. Dict., art. Moriah), and Rev. E. S. Ffoulkes (Ibid., art. Gerizim), but reasserted by Thomson (Land and the Book, vol. ii., p. 212), and is still generally accepted by Christian scholars.

‡ The Mosque of Omar, of which a picture is given opposite, occupies the site of the ancient Temple. Of the many attempts to restore that temple architecturally, none can be considered historically accurate or really successful.

§ 1 Kings viii., 3–9.

‖ Luke ii., 37.

¶ Exod. xxiii., 14–17.

** Luke ii., 22.

THE MOSQUE OF OMAR.

the Temple was the Jewish capitol as well as the Jewish Church. Wherever he might be, the devout Jew knelt toward this temple* as he offered his daily devotions to Jehovah

* 1 Kings viii., 30, 33, 38, 48; Dan. vi., 10.

who, in his imagination, dwelt between the cherubims.* The overthrow of the Temple was to him like the dethronement of God. Its restoration was the revival of his religion and his nationality. Destroyed in the Babylonish incursion under Nebuchadnezzar, it had been rebuilt by Zerubbabel under Cyrus. Pillaged, profaned, polluted by the heathen foes who in the long night of anarchy successively occupied Jerusalem, Herod found it in a state of ruin sadly typical of the desolation of that religious system of which it was the emblem. He was fond of architectural display. He was ambitious to found a dynasty which should equal in splendor that of Solomon. He was desirous to ingratiate himself with the Jewish people. He therefore inaugurated his reign by measures for the rebuilding of the ruined Temple. A thousand wagons were prepared. Ten thousand skilled workmen were gathered from the various parts of Palestine. A thousand priests were especially instructed in the arts of the stone-cutter and the carpenter. It was forty-six years before the last workman finally left the sacred edifice.†

The result was a temple whose architectural magnificence has perhaps never been surpassed in ancient or modern times.‡ It consisted of a series of courts, one within and rising above the other. On the apex of the hill, it crowned the city, which, by its presence, it made the Holy City. To the traveler approaching Jerusalem it was the most prominent object of sight, as to the Jew every where it was the most prominent object of a reverential affection. It covered an area of over nineteen acres.§ St. Peter's of Rome and St. Paul's of London combined cover an area not quite so large.‖

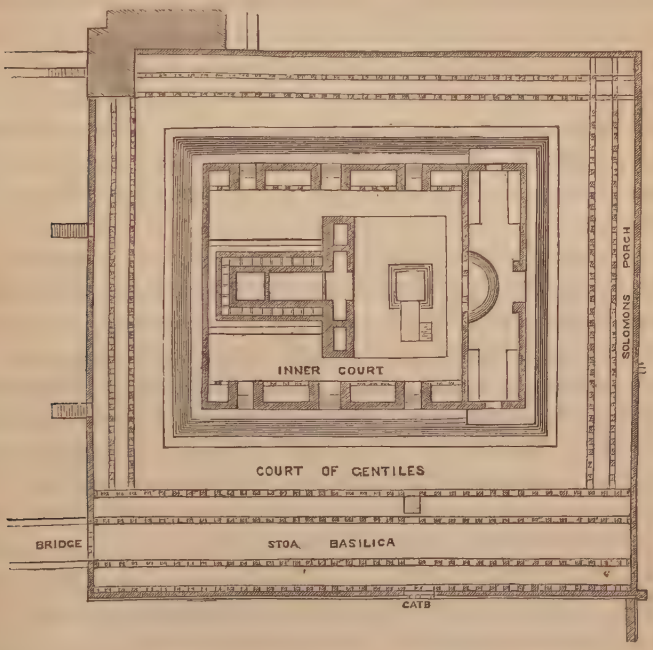
* Exod. xxv., 22; 2 Sam. vi., 2.

† The interior temple was a year and a half in rebuilding. Eight years longer the Levites labored on the outer court. But work was carried on in finishing rooms and perfecting details throughout nearly the whole of Herod's reign.

‡ Smith's Bible Dict., art. Temple. § Brown's Antiquities, i., 40.

‖ It occupied a square of 400 cubits, or about 600 feet. St. Peter's and St. Paul's are both cruciform, but their dimensions may be roughly estimated as respectively 600×400 feet, and 500×200 feet.

The material was white marble, the roof cedar, the architecture probably an admixture of the Greek and Roman. Huge gates, magnificently ornamented, admitted the worshiper who had ascended the holy hill to its outer court, which, as the reader will see by reference to the annexed ground plan, completely encircled the Temple proper within. Entering on the southern side, the visitor found himself in the largest of these courts, the Stoa Basilica. Alone it comprised an area



larger than the largest of the English cathedrals. Four rows of marble pillars of dazzling brightness supported a roof whose beams and boards of cedar were elaborately carved, and divided the court into three aisles, like those of a Gothic cathedral. The floor was a mosaic of many-colored stones. A marble balustrade, magnificently carved, surrounded the Temple proper, which was built within this court, and raised

a few steps above it. Inscriptions in Greek and Latin forbade the heathen from advancing farther under pain of death. But the privileged Jew, ascending a flight of steps, and passing through one of the richly-ornamented doors which admitted to the sacred inclosure, found himself in the true Temple, with its terraced courts of the women, of Israel and of the priests, rising one above the other, with its doors of cedar and of brass covered with carving and richly gilt, with its treasury boxes for the gifts, its golden and marble tables for the shew bread, its silver table covered with the golden and silver utensils for the Temple service, with its altar for the burnt offerings, and with its inmost temple, itself the size of an ordinary modern church,* within which was the Holy of Holies, veiled from even priestly gaze by the impenetrable curtain so mysteriously rent in the hour of Christ's crucifixion.

The outer court of this temple was known as the Court of the Gentiles.† Here all persons, of all religions and nationalities, might resort. No public worship, save perhaps an occasional religious procession to and from the Temple within, was conducted in this court. But here the people gathered for religious discussion. Here the scribes taught them in the law. Here Christ preached to the people in the last days of his ministry.‡ Here the Christians assembled daily, with one accord, after their Lord's ascension.§ Here the apostles preached Christ, and him crucified, to the assembled Jews.‖ In brief, what the Areopagus was to the Greek,¶ the Court of the Gentiles was to the Jew, the political and literary, because the religious, exchange of the nation.

This, rather we should say, it had been. It was one of the signs of the times that commerce had intrenched upon relig-

* It was 90×30 feet. See Brown's Antiquities, i., 185, 199.

† For a farther description of the Temple, see Kitto's Bible Cyclopædia, and Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Temple; Brown's Antiquities, i., as *ante*; Josephus, Antiquities, xv., 11; Wars, v., 5; and other authorities referred to in the Appendix.

‡ Matt. xxi., 23.

§ Luke xxiv., 53.

‖ Acts v., 21, 42.

¶ Acts xvii., 19.

ion. The Temple, from being the centre of Jewish worship, had become as well the centre of Jewish trade. The people, scattered not only throughout all Palestine, but in outlying provinces, were unable to bring from afar the sacrifices for the altar. The Mosaic law permitted them to sell their first-fruits, and with the money purchase their gifts at Jerusalem.* They were required also to pay for the support of the Temple service a half shekel.† This must be paid in Jewish coinage. Gentile money would pollute the sacred coffers. Thus gradually the great feast-days became great market-days, as they still are among the nomadic tribes of the Mohammedan religion. At first, probably money-changing was conducted quietly in the vestibule of the Temple. Then perhaps one bolder than the rest placed his table there. Others followed. A corrupt priesthood, sharing in the profits of the traffic, winked at the profanation it involved, until at length the place of public religious assemblage became the public market of Jerusalem. Nor was this all. The greed which hesitated not to dishonor God scrupled not to defraud man. The lame, the blind, the diseased were sold for sacrifice by the Levite, and accepted by the priest.‡ The same officer served as collector of customs for the Lord and as broker for himself, and, as he charged a commission of two and a half per cent. on every shekel, and would not even suffer two persons to put in one shekel to pay the tribute of both without first paying to him the brokerage, he did on the great festal occasions of Judaism a very profitable business.

Christ, soon after the scenes recorded in the last chapter, came up to Jerusalem on the Passover, there to inaugurate his public ministry. The sight which met his eyes as he entered the Temple aroused his indignation. The aisles of the outer courts were filled with the booths of the traders. The tesselated pavement was covered with the straw and filth of the stable. The magnificent marble pillars were made to

* See Deut. xiv., 24–26. † Exod. xxx., 11–16. See post, ch. xxiii.
‡ See Mal. i., 7, 8.

serve as hitching-posts for the sheep and cattle. The great gateways were obstructed with the tables of the brokers. The unseemly smell of the market entering the Temple gates mingled with the fragrance of the incense before the altar. The bleating of sheep, the cooing of doves, the lowing of cattle, the clink of money, and the loud altercations of traders mingled with the music of its sacred service. Christ was filled with indignation. He remembered, perhaps, the ancient prophecy, "He shall purify the sons of Levi."* He felt that there was need that judgment should begin at the house of God. He acted on the impulse of the moment with a zeal which, to his disciples, seemed untempered with discretion. It was a case where burning vehemence alone could win the victory which would have been denied to prudence and calculation.

We are apt to disrobe Christ of those very qualities which most enkindle our hearts. He was meek and lowly of spirit, but he was also possessed of ardent though self-restrained impulses. He was the Lamb of God, but also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The wrath of the Lamb, of which the revelator speaks, was occasionally exemplified in his earthly life.

He gathered from the floor some of the rushes strewed there for the beds of the cattle. Such appears to be the meaning of the words translated in our English version "small cords."† He wove from them a scourge. With a countenance terrible in the majesty of a justifiable but impetuous and irresistible indignation, he advanced on these usurpers of the sacred courts. He demanded the meaning of their sacrilege. He drove the cattle from their stalls. He overturned the tables of the money-changers. There was something in his mien which forbade resistance. It was perhaps with this scene in mind that John afterward significantly described the Son of man as having eyes like a flame of fire, and a voice like the sound of many waters.‡

A panic spread through the assemblage. The owners fol-

* Mal. iii., 3. † Alford, in loco. ‡ Rev. i., 14, 15; ii., 18.

lowed their fleeing cattle. The brokers did not even stop to gather up their money. The whole crowd of traffickers fled before this single Galilean. That they neither questioned his authority nor resisted his demands imports perhaps nothing more than a moral miracle—the wondrousness that is of Christ's moral power. The spirit of greed is seldom brave. A guilty conscience makes cowards of us all. Christ's act was legal. It was popular. It was a protest against the trafficking usurpations of the few in favor of the sacred rights of the many. The common people welcomed the restoration of their temple courts. Even the purer portion of the Pharisaic party rejoiced to see removed the profanation they abhorred, but dared not protest against. At all events, it was not till the scene was over and the courts were cleared that the traders regained sufficient courage to demand of Jesus some evidence of his authority. He gave them but little satisfaction by his enigmatical reply, afterward so treasured up against him: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Strange prophecy, strangely fulfilled. Already, by their spiritual corruptions, they had destroyed that Mosaic economy of which the Temple was but the symbol. In the crucifixion of Christ they completed that destruction. The literal overthrow of the Temple by the legions of Titus forty years later was but the fall of the already girdled tree. After a protracted siege, whose scenes of horror can find no parallel in history, the Roman general captured the holy city, and so utterly destroyed the Temple, which the Jews had made their fortress, that of the superstructure* it was literally true that not one stone was left upon another. All attempts to rebuild it have proved in vain. But on the ruins of the ancient theocracy, never to be restored, Christ, by his victory over death, has in the resurrection built that Christian system which is the second and more glorious Temple to the

* This is only true of the superstructure. The foundation stones still remain, and are now being exhumed.

same Jehovah; that covers no holy hill, but fills the whole earth; that has no courts of the Gentiles, of the women, and of the priests, but wherein the partition wall is broken down; where there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, but all minister as priests unto God, entering daily even into the Holy of Holies through the blood of the new covenant.

This incident produced a profound impression. Many were inclined to attach themselves to Jesus as the founder of a new school of Jewish philosophy. More, perhaps, were inclined to inquire farther of his doctrine. Of these was Nicodemus, a man of wealth,* of Pharisaic learning, of extended influence, a member of the Sanhedrim,† and himself a teacher of the Jewish laws.‡ A fair type of the class to which he belonged, the better portion of the Pharisees, he possessed culture without courage; moral taste without manly strength; an appreciation of the truth, but no irresistible craving for it; curiosity to learn of Christ, no self-denying earnestness of purpose to follow him. It was to such Christ was afterward accustomed to say, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me can not be my disciple."§ He sought an interview with Jesus at night, not for fear of the Jews, for as yet there was no embittered enmity, but only an aroused curiosity among the people, but for more quiet conversation, or, perhaps, from an unwillingness to commit himself to this as yet unknown Galilean.

In his opening sentence Nicodemus defines his position. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." He professes a certain kind of faith in Jesus. He accepts him as a divinely-commissioned teacher, coming from God, bringing with him a new revelation of truth, inspired for its inculcation by the indwelling of God's Spirit. Thus he puts himself at the head historically of the humanitarian school. He is the first advocate of that philosophy

* 1 John xix., 39.
† John iii., 1; vii., 45–50.
‡ John iii., 10.
§ Luke xiv., 27.

which fails to recognize the atoning sacrifice of the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," but professes for Jesus of Nazareth a profound reverence as for a "teacher sent from God;" which rejects a supernatural salvation, but nevertheless pays seeming honor to Christianity. To secure at the outset of his career such an indorsement from the Supreme Court of Judaism as Nicodemus, with honest but mistaken reverence, thus offered, might well seem a vantage to Jesus's cause worth contending for. And Nicodemus, it is clear, spoke for others as well as for himself.

But Jesus always declined half homage, even though it came from the highest quarters. His response as distinctly defines his position. He is no mere teacher come from God. He is the Life of the world. It is not instruction, but new moral power that humanity needs. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God."

This symbol was more significant to a Jewish Rabbi than to us. The Jews were accustomed to receive to the privileges of Judaism proselytes from heathen religions. The Jewish law provided for the public admission of such converts to the fellowship of Israel.* They were circumcised in token of their adoption, and baptized as a sign of their purification. They were then said to be born again. Old things passed away. All things became new. Old relationships were dissolved. The convert might marry his nearest kin without imputed crime, for she was of kin to him no more.† Jesus seized this familiar fact, and employed it to illustrate the truth that it is not intellectual conviction, but a fundamental change in the moral forces of the soul which is needed to initiate his disciples into the kingdom of God.

None are so deaf, it is said, as those that will not hear. None certainly are so stupid as those that will not comprehend. It is impossible to suppose that Nicodemus was hon-

* Exod. xii., 48; Numb. ix., 14.

† Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Proselytes.

est in his literal interpretation of this familiar symbol. "How can a man be born again?" he asked. "Can he enter his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus simply reaffirmed his declaration. At the same time, without explaining, he defined it. "Ye must be born again," said he, in substance; not merely of water; no external ceremonial can cleanse you from sin; not by re-entering the mother's womb, for that which is born of flesh is flesh; but by the indwelling Spirit of God. How, I can not tell you; for the secrets of God's operations you understand not, neither in nature nor in grace. You can not tell of the wind whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Nor would it be of use for me to give you the information; for when I tell you of earthly things, man's need of a divinely-wrought change, the evidences of which you may see for yourself, you believe not. How, then, will you believe if I explain to you heavenly things—the divine methods in working out that change? But what you must do to receive this new birth I will tell you. It is the gift of God. It is received through faith in him who has come down from heaven, a witness of heavenly things. He is yet to fulfill the ancient type; and, as the serpent in the wilderness, so is he to be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might be saved. For not to judge mankind; not to build up Jewish pride on the ruin of other races; not, like Moses, to destroy the Gentile that he may save the Jew, is the Messiah revealed. He comes to afford to all mankind this new birth, and so to administer to every creature an entrance into the kingdom of God. He is the hope, not merely of the Jewish nation, but of that outlying world which the Pharisee, indeed, despises, but which God loves, even to the giving of his own and only-begotten Son. He who rejects such a Gospel of love, borne by such a Savior, needs not to be judged. By that very rejection he sets the seal to his own condemnation. He needs, in truth, no other.

Such, in brief, is an epitome of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus—in the beginning a conversation, in the end a discourse.

It has been said that the doctrines of Christ were gradually developed. If by this is meant that little by little he unfolded the truth as men were able to bear it, it is true. If it is meant that little by little the truth unfolded itself in his own mind, nothing more than this conversation with Nicodemus is necessary to show the error; for in this conversation, at the outset of his ministry, he enunciated those sublime truths of regeneration, divine Sonship with the Father, an atoning sacrifice for sin, and a divine judgment on unbelief, to which centuries of intensest thought have added nothing save interpretation and application.

This conversation produced no immediate results. It was not lost, however. Nicodemus went away to ponder the truths which seemed so enigmatical to him, and to honor in secret the Rabbi whom he dared not openly confess. Not till after three years of germination—not till this seed had been watered by Christ's blood, did it appear above the ground in open confession.

CHAPTER X.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.*

DURING the events recorded in the preceding chapter, John the Baptist had continued faithfully his prophetic ministry. While Jesus had thrown down the gauntlet to the scribes and Pharisees in their citadel, John had continued to war against their spirit in the outskirts of Judea. He had removed his preaching-place from the ford at Bethabara to Enon, near Salim.† The location of the latter place is involved in uncertainty. No less than four different sites are assigned by different prominent geographers. We accept the hypothesis of Robinson, which places it near the northeastern border of Judea, in the vicinity of Samaria. Here Jesus joined him shortly after the events recorded in the last chapter.

The feast of the Passover occurs in spring. During the summer the two cousins labored together. Their teachings were not the same, but their spirit was not inharmonious; and, if compared with the genial spirit of Jesus, the doctrines of John seem to savor of too stern a legalism, it is only as the month of March, which bridges between the old and the new dispensations in nature, retains something of the bleak-

* John iii., 22–36; iv., 1–46.

† "John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim."—John iii., 23. Whether we accept the theory of Van der Vede as given in Smith's Bib. Dict., article "Salim," which locates it within the borders of Samaria, and near to Galilee, or that of Robinson (Bib. Researches, iii., 333), which locates it a little southeast of Mount Gerizim, or that of Barclay (City of the Great King, p. 564), which places it five miles northeast of Jerusalem, it would be in Christ's road to Galilee, and in neither case far out of his way in journeying toward Jacob's well.

ness of the winter that is past while preparing for the summer that is to follow. The spirit of denominationalism is no modern development. We shall meet in our history the beginning of it, and shall have occasion to notice how promptly Jesus always rebuked and repressed it. This spirit began to manifest itself, not between the leaders, but among their followers. Jesus's popularity aroused the envy of some of John's disciples. Christ's disregard of forms attracted the notice and awakened the suspicions of the alert. For Jesus baptized not.

This was not the worst, however. His disciples baptized more converts than did John. Any heresy is more pardonable than success. Among themselves, and with the Pharisees, who were perhaps inclined to hold the Baptist responsible for the supposed heresies of his cousin, the disciples of John debated the question of purifying. To John they frankly told their complaints. "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him!" It is not the last time that theological controversy has been made a cover for personal envy.

Jesus had too many inevitable conflicts before him to court a needless one. In spite, therefore, of John's cordial and renewed testimony to his Messiahship, he left Judea to return again to his Galilean home. His road led through Samaria. A simple incident on the journey opened the way for his first preaching to the Gentiles.

The capital of Samaria, Sichem, called by the Jews derisively Sychar, *i.e.*, liar or drunkard, is beautifully placed in a pass in the mountains. Mount Ebal rises on the one side, Mount Gerizim on the other. The verdure of the narrow valley which intervenes is said to be unsurpassed in beauty by any in the Holy Land. Historical reminiscences add to the attractiveness of a scene for which nature has done so much. Here the Lord first appeared to Abraham.* Here

* Gen. xii., 6.

Jacob bought a piece of ground, and erected to the Almighty his first altar.* Hither he sent his sons to find pasturage for their flocks, and here Joseph sought them, though in vain.† Here, complying with the command of Moses,‡ Joshua, gathering the people of Israel after the conquest of Canaan, rehearsed to them the law, reminded them of its blessings and its curses, pointed to the mountains as everlasting reminders of both, and built an altar of unhewn stone, covered with plaster and inscribed with the law; then bade them farewell, and lay down to die.§ And here, after their long pilgrimage in the wilderness was ended, the Israelites brought the bones of Joseph, and buried them in land that belonged to his father Jacob.‖ Among the traditions which invested this spot with peculiar romantic interest was one that Jacob had dug a well in his own land, near the site of the city of Shechem. The well remains, and is pointed out to the traveler to the present day.

All these sacred associations were, however, more than neutralized to the Jew by the subsequent history of the place. Nearly a thousand years before the commencement of the Christian era the ten tribes had seceded from the Jewish nation, and, by dividing, had deprived it of its power, and rendered it an easy prey to subsequent conquerors. Politically, the destruction of the Jewish Commonwealth may be traced to the successful secession of Israel under Jeroboam. A wily and unprincipled politician, he perceived that a united Church would be very apt to reunite a dissevered people. By monarchical decrees, therefore, he rescinded the provision of the law requiring all the males to go thrice a year to Jerusalem, established a new and idolatrous worship in place of the Temple service, and organized a new priesthood to conduct it. From his day, Israel, deprived of the law and the Temple, steadily but rapidly degenerated. The throne which Jeroboam established was occupied by a succession of des-

* Gen. xxxiii., 18–20. † Gen. xxxvii., 12. ‡ Deut. xxvii., 4, 8.
§ Josh. viii., 30–35; xxiv., 1–25. ‖ Josh. xxiv., 32.

pots, among whom Ahab, of infamous memory, and Jezebel, his yet more infamous wife, possess a bad pre-eminence.*

At length, as explained in a previous chapter, Israel was carried away captive by the Assyrians, and the land was partially repopulated by colonies from the land of its conquerors. Suffering, as all new colonies do, from the hazards of an unknown country; believing, in the spirit of the age, that it was necessary to propitiate the favor of the gods of the land they occupied, they invoked the aid of Jewish priests, some of whom were accordingly sent to marry the religion of Moses to that of Assyria, the worship of Jehovah to that of Baal.

A nation of time-servers, the Samaritans thenceforth availed themselves of their double origin. When, in the mutations of war, Judaism was in the ascendency, they claimed to be Jews; when it was in disfavor, they asserted that they were heathen. In the rebuilding of Jerusalem refused a part,† and frustrated in their attempt to prevent its completion,‡ they constructed on Mount Gerizim a rival temple to that on Mount Moriah. Shechem became the rival of Jerusalem, and Samaria the Texas of Palestine, where all violators of Jewish law found an easy refuge from offended justice.§ Hence political animosity, religious rancor, race prejudice, and personal scorn for a really degenerate race, combined to constitute a hate the bitterness of which time has done nothing to allay. To the present day Jew and Samaritan will have no dealings with each other. Of these Samaritans, one hundred and fifty, still worshiping in a little synagogue at the foot of Mount Gerizim, are all that are left—"the oldest and the smallest sect in the world."‖

It was the month of December.¶ The farmers were just

* For the history of this secession and its consequences, see 1 Kings xii.

† Ezra iv., 2–5. ‡ Neh. iv., 1–6. § Josephus, Ant., xi., 8, § 6.

‖ Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, ch. v., p. 236.

¶ So Ellicott and Andrews. At the same time, there is some uncertainty whether Christ's statement, "Say not ye, There are four months, and then cometh harvest?" is significant of the season, or is a quotation of a proverbial expression. See Alford, in loco.

putting in the plow or casting the seed into the open furrows. The fruits of the fall had been gathered, the trees were bare of leaves, when Jesus, with a few companions, bidding farewell to John, whom he was never to see again, traveled the road which, leading over the hill-country from Jerusalem to Galilee, passes through the heart of Samaria, by its capital and chief city. About noon he reached Jacob's well. Wearied with the walk, he sat down to rest, while his disciples went into the neighboring city to replenish their scanty stock of provision.

The well of Palestine was and still is a romantic and sacred spot. It constituted a valuable property. It was often a subject of fierce contention. In times of war, even among the barbarous tribes of the East, to destroy a well was a violation of the laws of war. When near a town, it afforded a gathering-place for the inhabitants, who came to draw usually in the cool of the evening. In this respect it was to the Jewish town what a post-office is to a New England village—a sort of social centre. These wells were often deep. Sometimes a bucket and sweep were attached; sometimes a flight of steps led down within the well, which was large, to the surface of the water. The latter was the case in Jacob's well.

While Jesus was sitting here, a woman came out from the city to draw water. This was part of her domestic duties. The hour was unusual. But she was a woman of known evil character. The divorce laws of Samaria were wofully lax. She had left one husband after another, and was now living with a paramour, without even the poor forms of Samaritan law to shield her from reproach. Perhaps she desired to escape the observation of the multitude that flocked to the well at evening.

Jesus's attempt to enter into conversation with her she at first repels. His simple request for water she scornfully refuses. "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" His offer of spiritual life un-

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der the symbol of living water she meets with badinage. "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; whence, then, hast thou that living water?" His reiterated offer, "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" she repels with jeer. "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."* Then he breaks in upon the conversation with a seeming irrelevant request: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." In vain she denies that she has a husband. By a single sentence he discloses his knowledge of her life. "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband," and so extorts from her the confession, "Thou art a prophet," and prepares the way for the announcement to her of his Messiahship. She essays to change the conversation from a tone too personal to be comfortable by bringing up the standing controversy between Jew and Samaritan as to place of worship; not the last time that men have endeavored to evade the plain duty of repentance for acknowledged sin by discussing doubtful theological problems; and she listens in a far different spirit to Christ's response, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." The theological controversy is of the shell, not the substance. "The true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Her request, made in sarcasm, "Give me this water, that I thirst not," he has already begun to answer in earnest.

The coming of the disciples breaks off the conversation. She hurries into the city in such haste that she not only quite forgets the original request of Jesus for a drink, but leaves her water-pot behind her. Her exaggerated story of Jesus's disclosures of her life awakens the curiosity of her acquaint-

* That this request is a serious one is asserted by some commentators. But it seems more consonant with the character of the interview to suppose it to be a willful misunderstanding, as in the case of Nicodemus (John iii., 4), rather than the literal interpretation of a prosaic nature, as in Matt. xvi., 7, and Luke xxii., 38.

ances; a number come out to see this new Rabbi of whom such wonderful things are told, and the result is an invitation to remain and preach in their city, an invitation which he accepts without hesitation.

Jesus's conversational power is quite as remarkable a feature of his ministry as his power of public address. His conversation with the woman at the well is worthy the careful study of every disciple who desires to acquire facility in personal religious conversation, especially of every pastor and Sabbath-school teacher. His condescension in entering into the conversation at all has been often noted, and wisely. The Jewish Rabbis deemed it unworthy of their dignity to instruct a woman. Not one of them would have been seen conversing with a Samaritan. Few, even of modern ministers, would have ventured to address religious conversation to an adulteress. That a king, whose mission was the establishment of a universal empire, should spend his time in converse with such a woman, little consorts with popular ideas of kingly dignity. But Jesus never suffered dignity to stand between him and the common people. His affability and accessibility were characteristic. Something of this spirit has often characterized the truly great, and endeared their names to the communities to which they were given: Frederick the Great, Alfred the Great, Napoleon, and, not least of all, Abraham Lincoln.

Christ's *method* is equally noteworthy. Between a Jew and a Samaritan there was little in common. Christ finds somewhat in the universal wants of humanity, and so opens the conversation, not first by offering instruction to her, but by that surest method of access to a woman's heart, appealing to her generosity for a favor. Her refusal does not rebuff him. On the contrary, he makes it the text by a transition, sudden, but not abrupt, for spiritual discourse. To his mind every thing in nature is symbolical of spiritual truth. The lily of the field is significant of trust. The city on the hill is an illustration of the power of Christian example. The

leaven in the dough is a type of the moral forces that regenerate society. The wine in the cup reminds of the vine and its branches, and so of the Christian's dependence on his Lord. To such a mind the transition from the commonest objects to the deepest spiritual truths and experiences is never abrupt. It is easy for him to pass from a request for water to instruction respecting the spiritual needs and supply of the soul. He patiently persists in spite of her spirit of badinage. At length, by a single stroke, he pierces her conscience. But he does not repeat the wound. He wishes not to compel the open confession of her shame, but only to arouse her own self-condemnation; and, leaving his words to work their own result, he suffers her to change the conversation at her will.

Not less remarkable, certainly, is the moral power which he puts forth by his mere personal presence. That Christ should have condescended to converse with a Samaritan has seemed wonderful. To me it seems more wonderful that the Samaritans should have condescended to converse with Christ. Yet not only this: so were they impressed by the air and bearing of this seeming Jewish Rabbi, that, despite all their intense prejudice, they besought him to remain and preach, the first and only instance in which a Samaritan company has been known to request religious instruction of their hereditary foes, the Jews.

The effect of his two days' preaching was marked, and illustrates the meaning of his metaphorical prophecy, "One soweth and another reapeth. I send you to reap that whereon other men labored." Among the earliest of the Christian churches was that which was organized in Samaria, first under the preaching of Philip, and officially recognized by the council at Jerusalem through Peter and John,* the latter of whom, at least, was of the number that marveled that Jesus talked with a Samaritan woman. And among the earliest Christian apologists and martyrs was that Justin, surnamed philosopher for his learning and martyr for his death, who

* Acts viii., 5, 14–17.

was born one half a century later, near the very spot where Jesus thus planted the seeds of the first Gentile Church. Perhaps it was the cordial reception which this Samaritan city gave to him, driven out of Judea by the machinations of the Pharisees, and soon to be mobbed in his own city of Nazareth by his neighbors and the friends of his youth, that later suggested to him the parable of that good Samaritan who succored the wounded and half-dead traveler that silently appealed to priest and Levite for compassion and assistance, but in vain.

After two days' sojourn in Samaria Jesus proceeded to Galilee. He had there now no fixed home. Joseph was dead.* Mary had left the old home at Nazareth, but had not yet established a new one at Capernaum.† At Cana, however, Christ had friends who would give him a warm welcome. To Cana he repaired. The Sabbatic year had drawn to its close. The disciples, therefore—one of whom, at least, had accompanied him to Jerusalem—returned to their usual avocations. They had, as yet, no suspicion of the life-work which was before them. Christ was not yet ready to enter upon his. Not till the bud drops can the fruit appear. And John the Baptist's imprisonment, the accepted signal for the commencement of Christ's public and continuous ministry, had not yet taken place. A single and singular miracle added, however, to Christ's metropolitan reputation, and aided in preparing the public mind to receive him with honor, and listen to his teachings with attention.

* This, at least, is universally surmised from the change of residence, and the fact that his name is never subsequently mentioned, and that Mary is treated as the head of the household from this time.

† John ii., 12.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREAT TEACHER.

IT is about six or eight hours from Capernaum to Cana.* At the former city resided an officer of the court of Antipas, whose son lay dangerously ill with one of the fevers common to that locality. He heard rumors of this new prophet of the Lord, who was bringing back the days when God walked evidently among men. Not unreasonable is the surmise that the fishermen-disciples, returning to their boats by the Sea of Galilee, carried thither the story of his unrecorded miracles at Jerusalem. This officer determined to apply to Jesus for aid. He went in person to Cana, and besought Christ to come down and heal his son. This Jesus declined to do. He was not a physician, subject to the summoning of patients. But he promised him that the son should recover, and the father, reluctantly returning—lingering, indeed, until the next day, hoping, perhaps, for some farther and more tangible assurance than a word—then learned that, at the very hour of his interview with Jesus, the fever left his son.† It is sometimes said that Jesus's mission was chiefly among the poor. It was so, because the poor chiefly gave him welcome to their circle. But he was no less ready to offer instruction to Nicodemus than to the Samaritan woman; to heal the nobleman's son than the penniless, outcast leper.

This event produced a profound impression on the community. It attached this officer and his family at once to Christ.‡ He is even conjectured to be the Chuza, steward of Herod, whose wife accompanied and ministered to Jesus.§

* See supra, ch. viii., p. 104, note.

† John iv., 46–54.

‡ John iv., 53.

§ Luke viii., 3.

It obtained for Christ influential friends, and may thus have contributed to his subsequent decision to make Capernaum his home. It certainly opened the way for his ministry there. From one of the better class of Roman tax-gatherers in that city he subsequently called one of his apostles, and the writer of one of his biographies.* And this miracle, known through the nobleman's influence throughout the court, may have been one secret of the faith of that centurion of the same town who subsequently asked of Christ to heal his servant, and avowed his belief that he could do it by a word, without entering his house.†

Now it was that the rumor ran through Palestine that the stern old prophet John had met the prophet's fate. The voice that had spoken with such majesty of utterance in the wilderness, and whose echoes had been caught up and repeated through all the Holy Land, was hushed and silent in the castle of Machærus. Unable to brook the denunciations of this modern Elijah, who, like his God, knew no distinction of persons, Herod had played the part of a second Ahab, his wife a very second Jezebel, and had silenced by imprisonment the voice of condemnation he could not gainsay.‡

But, though the voice was silenced, the message was not,

* Luke v., 27; Matt. ix., 9.

† "This miracle, the healing of the nobleman's son, is wrongly regarded by Ewald, De Wette, and Baur as identical with the healing of the centurion's servant (Matt. viii., 5–13; Luke vii., 1–10). The differences between the two miracles are radical. One is wrought at Cana, the other at Capernaum. On the one hand we have an officer of the king, a Jew by birth; on the other, a Roman centurion. In the former case the request is preferred on behalf of a son; in the latter, of a servant. Lastly, while the father entreats Jesus to come into his house, the centurion deprecates his doing so." —*Pressensé's Life of Christ*, p. 338, note. To this Trench well adds that "the heart and inner kernel of the two narratives is different." The nobleman, weak in faith, thinks Christ's presence is necessary, and importunes haste lest the child die; the centurion, strong in faith, rightly thinks a word from Jesus enough. To the same general effect are Augustine, Alford, Lange, and Ebrard.

‡ See, for account of John's imprisonment, its cause and its result, chap. xxi.: The Prisoner at Machærus.

and could not be. The same rumor that bore the news of the Baptist's imprisonment, carried the intelligence that among the hills of Galilee a greater prophet had arisen to take his place; for, emerging at last from that retirement which he was to know no more till he found it in the tomb, Jesus began to go throughout all Galilee, preaching the coming of the kingdom of God.*

* The chronology of this period of Christ's life is involved in great obscurity. John alone gives any account of Christ's early Judean ministry, including the expulsion of the traders from the Temple, the conversation with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan woman, and the second visit to Jerusalem, when the paralytic was healed at the Pool of Bethesda. The synoptists alone give any account of his early Galilean ministry (if we except the miracle at the marriage in Cana). Their explanation as to the commencement of his public ministry also differs. "When Jesus heard that John was cast into prison he departed into Galilee," is the statement of the synoptists (Matt. iv., 12; Mark i., 14). "When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, he left Judea and departed again into Galilee," is John's statement (John iv., 1, 3). Some of the harmonists have supposed that both reasons co-operated, and that Jesus remained in Judea until John's imprisonment. So Townsend, Ellicott, Robinson, and Ebrard. This, however, does not accord with John iv., 1, 3, which certainly leaves the impression that the Baptist was still baptizing disciples when Jesus left. Others have supposed that John was not imprisoned till after Christ's second visit to Jerusalem, recorded in John v., which they suppose to have preceded his Galilean ministry. So Andrews and Pressensé. But Christ's reference to John at the time of that visit (John v., 32–35) indicates that the Baptist was already imprisoned, and the whole tone of the controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees is such as only characterized a later stage of Christ's ministry. While, then, the chronological order is very uncertain, we prefer to suppose that John was apprehended after Jesus left Enon, but before he commenced his public preaching in Nazareth. If, as seems probable, Cana was temporarily his home, he may have remained there quietly meanwhile, his disciples having returned to their former avocations. We adopt, therefore, the following order as best satisfying the conditions of the different narratives: Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to inaugurate his ministry there (John ii., 13–25; iii., 1–21); after the Passover, joins the Baptist in Enon (John iii., 22–36); leaves Judea to avoid threatened controversy, going through Samaria on his way, and arriving at the residence either of his mother or some friends in Cana, where he heals the sick child by a word (John iv.); hears of John's imprisonment, which takes place about this time (Matt. iv., 12; Mark i., 14); commences his Galilean ministry, marked, if not inaugurated by his sermon at Nazareth (Luke iv., 16–31); returns to Capernaum (Matt. iv., 13–16; Luke iv., 31), where he calls four disciples (Luke v.,

He arrived at the same result as John—the production in the hearts of the people of repentance for their sins. But his method was characteristically different. John the Baptist attempted to drive men from sin by warning them of coming judgment. Christ endeavored to attract them to a higher life by proclaiming emancipation through the Gospel.* John withdrew wholly from the Church whose corruptions he denounced. Christ commenced his ministry in the Temple, and continued it in the synagogues. Their structure and form of service gave him peculiar facilities for reaching the ear of the common people.

The history of the origin of the Jewish synagogue is involved in great uncertainty. Doubtless from the earliest times there had been other meetings for religious worship than those which took place in the Temple, but they had been occasional, irregular, and unofficial. During the captivity, however, the Temple service was of necessity given up. The people were accustomed to meet for prayer and instruction at the houses of the prophets.† The reading and exposition of the Sacred Writings constituted the characteristic feature of their simple services. Taunted by their brethren at Jerusalem with their apparent abandonment by God, to whose Temple they could no longer resort, their prophet replied that God was their sanctuary whenever and wherever they assembled in his name.‡ Thus, years before Christ, God had prepared the way for that teaching of the universality of the divine presence which is the foundation of the Christian Church.

When the people returned to Palestine they brought with them these conventicles, to which they had become greatly attached. They gradually organized them more perfectly.

1–11), and whence he continues his ministry throughout Galilee (Mark i., 38, 39; Matt. iv., 23–25), until he goes up to Jerusalem to attend the unknown feast mentioned in John v.

* See Matt. iv., 17; Mark i., 15, as interpreted by Luke iv., 17–21.

† Ezek. xiv., 1; xx., 1; xxxiii., 31. ‡ Ezek. xi., 15, 16.

Buildings were erected. Officers to supervise the services were appointed. Forms of prayer were instituted. A regular selection of scriptures for every Sabbath was made. The hereditary rivalry between priest and prophet repeated itself, and led the Pharisaic party to make much of the synagogue, as the Sacerdotal party still made much of the Temple. There was at least one established in every considerable town. In the larger places there were frequently several. Even in the smaller villages, a consecrated spot, a place of prayer, afforded a substitute therefor. The Jewish Rabbis assert that there were over four hundred and fifty in Jerusalem. Recent investigations have exhumed the ruins of some of these synagogues. Many of them appear to have been ornate and costly buildings, on which considerable expenditure had been lavished.

The synagogue fulfilled a threefold function in Judaism. It was the centre of civilization in the little community. It constituted, as we have already said,* the village school, where a Jewish Rabbi gathered the children of the village for instruction, if committing to memory the precepts of the law and the commentaries of the doctors can be dignified by such a name. It was also a court of justice. Its officers were local judges. Trials were had within its walls,† and the condemned were even scourged there.‡ But its chief function was public worship and religious instruction. Thrice a week, and three times on the Sabbath, it was opened for this purpose. Its service, in form, was an admixture of our modern church and our modern prayer-meeting. There was a rubric. Lessons for the day were appointed as in the Episcopal Church. A particular officer, called "the ruler of the synagogue," conducted the service. But he himself did not always read the appointed Scriptures, and seldom commented on them. For this he selected some from the audience before him. Any Rabbi might ordinarily avail himself of the synagogue service to offer to the people his comments

* Ch. v., p. 79. † Luke xii., 11; xxi., 12. ‡ Matt. x., 17; Mark xiii., 9.

upon the Word of God. Of this opportunity Jesus was accustomed to avail himself,* as did his apostles after him.† Christ is sometimes represented as withdrawing from the Church of his day. This is a mistake. Corrupt as it was, he labored in and with it until it expelled him.

Very little information is afforded us of Christ's personal appearance, or his methods in public speaking. It is a significant fact that no one of his biographers has attempted, in the remotest degree, a description of his form and features. There are clear indications that he did not possess a robust constitution.‡ But in a frame which was perhaps slight, there burned an unquenchable flame. He possessed, in a remarkable degree, that mysterious personal magnetism which is the secret of all true oratory. No sooner did he rise to speak than all eyes were fastened on him.§ He thus secured the attention of his audience from the outset. He spoke with an ease and grace which seemed marvelous to those who knew him only as the son of the carpenter.‖ Yet he exercised at times a wondrous moral power. Before his eyes the traders in the Temple quailed, and the mob at Nazareth¶ and at Jerusalem** opened to give him free passage through. The officers who were sent to take him at a later period in the Temple left him untouched, testifying—never man spake as this man.†† The soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane fell back when he turned, questioning and indignant, though mild, upon them.‡‡ This moral power already manifested itself. The common people, comparing his teaching with that of the scribes, noted the difference, saying, He speaks with authority.§§ Evidently in his presence every one felt

* Matt. xii., 9; Luke iv., 16; John vi., 59; xviii:, 20.

† Acts xiii., 5; xiv., 1; xviii., 4.

‡ The journey which left his disciples fresh enough to go into the city for provisions exhausted him.—John iv., 6, 8. Under the cross which the condemned carried to the place of execution, he sank, unable to complete the task.—Matt. xxvii., 32; Mark xv., 21; Luke xxiii., 26. Compare also Isaiah liii., 2.

§ Luke iv., 20. ‖ Luke iv., 22.

¶ Luke iv., 30. ** John x., 39. †† John vii., 32, 45, 46.

‡‡ John xviii., 6. §§ Mark i., 22; Luke iv., 32.

that he was before no ordinary man. Behind his words was a powerful personality. The teacher was more than the lessons which he taught.

He did not impress the common people as a learned man. Of the learning of the schools, he perhaps, humanly speaking, knew little. For that learning he cared nothing. He openly condemned it.* As the gardener sometimes gathers in spring the dead leaves that he may burn them, Jesus raked away these traditions of the past that he might get at the roots of life. He touched them, if at all, with the torch of a sharp sarcasm that set them in a blaze. But he was well versed in the three books which make up God's library on the earth—Life, Nature, and the Scriptures.

From his mother he had acquired familiarity with the latter. He knew them thoroughly. He quoted from them often, and referred to them by indirection yet more frequently. He pointed to them as witnesses to his mission.† He confounded his antagonists by new disclosures of their hidden meaning.‡ He was equally familiar with the law, the poetry, and the prophecies.

Those of his disciples who, in this respect, have most closely resembled him, have always possessed the greatest moral power over mankind. From the days of King Josiah§ to those of Luther, every reformation of the Church has been wrought by the resurrection of the entombed Word of God.

Nature no less lay open to him. He loved her as the minister of God's mercies and the revelator of his truth. To him all nature was a sublime parable, into whose significance he gives to our duller vision an occasional glimpse; and we know that there are meanings yet beyond, which he has not disclosed. The hieroglyphics of nature he perpetually interpreted. The flower that bloomed at his feet,‖ the bird that

* Matt. xv., 3–9; Mark vii., 5–13. † John v., 39.
‡ Matt. xxii., 31, 32, 42–45; Mark ii., 25, 26; Matt. xii., 5–7.
§ 2 Kings xxii., 8–13; xxiii. ‖ Matt. vi., 28, 29.

caroled its springy lay above his head,* the storm that hurtled in the air,† assumed a new significance, and, voiced by him, spoke with new language. He possessed that intuitive apprehension of moral truths that gives to physical phenomena their soul, which is the secret of all metaphor, and the power of all true poetry of nature.

Human life was his last, and, we may almost say, his best-read book. "He knew what was in man."‡ With divine intuition he pierced the disguise in which we all constantly enwrap ourselves, and read the subtlest secrets of the soul within. To him the still unsolved riddle of the ages, man, was no enigma. Into the caskets, gold, silver, lead, in which, as in those of Portia, that contained Bassanio's fate, the soul lies oft concealed, he glanced with unerring vision, and read the secret writing which alone gives it its true value. It was this divine knowledge, which we only blunderingly approximate by much observation and hard study, that gave him such wondrous power over the hearts of men. In all his controversies he never shelled concealed batteries at random, as we often have to do. He knew who needed comfort, who reproof. He knew how to puncture Nicodemus's pride, to wring confession from the dissolute yet ill-satisfied woman at the well, to expose the avarice that still clung to the rich young noble, and forbade his winning in that race that demands of every competitor his unrobing.§ With the events of his times and with the occupations of his audiences he made himself familiar. Life furnished him his most frequent texts and his chief store-house of illustrations. He made concurrent history enforce the truths he taught. The imprisonment of John the Baptist afforded him a text for a discrimination between the covenant of law and the Gospel of liberty.‖ The massacre of the Galileans gave point to a brief but pungent exhortation to repentance.¶ The attempted deposition of Archelaus suggested one of his most signifi-

* Matt. vi., 26.
† Matt. vii., 24–27.
‡ John ii., 25.
§ Matt. xix., 16–22.
‖ Matt. xi., 7–15.
¶ Luke xiii., 1–5.

cant parables.* The common events of every-day experience were equally significant to him. He borrowed from the merchant,† the fisherman,‡ the farmer,§ the court,‖ the commonest avocations of the housekeeper.¶ Not till a later period, it is true, did he employ those matchless stories whose pure but simple beauty is only enhanced by the truth which they contain, as a beautiful face is made luminous by the soul which speaks in the silent language of its changeful features. But the characteristics of his later teaching throw back their light upon the fundamental characteristics of this his earlier ministry; and, however variant in form, we know that in essence they were the same.

He rarely spoke in lengthy or formal discourse. Tried by the laws which govern a modern orator, his brief but pregnant sayings would not stand the test of scholastic criticism. He delighted in apothegms, proverbs, brief and pithy sentences, and even startling paradoxes.** These cling to the memory, which refuses to retain more elaborate expositions. Repeated from age to age, they have become interwoven into the very fabric of all literature. The oration, like a stately tree infixed into the soil, furnishes its shade and fruit only to the few who can gather about it. The proverb, like a single seed wafted by the winds of heaven, even into other lands, repeats itself in other generations, and in various climes and multitudinous forms of speech.

His teaching was stimulating rather than informing. De Quincey has divided literature into two classes—books of instruction and books of power. The words of Christ were words of power. "The words that I speak unto you," said he, "they are spirit and they are life."†† He aimed not to do the world's thinking for it, but to make the world think for

* Luke xix., 12–28. Compare Josephus, Antiq., xvii., 9, § 3; xi.

† Matt. xiii., 45, 46. ‡ Luke v., 10; Matt. xiii., 47–50.

§ Matt. xiii., 3–9, 24–30. ‖ Luke xiv., 16–24. ¶ Matt. xiii., 33.

** Note, for example of this characteristic of his teaching, the Sermon on the Mount. Matt. v., 10–12, 14, 29, 30, 44; vi., 3, 21, 24, 34; vii., 1, 7, 12, 20.

†† John vi., 63. Compare Luke iv., 32.

itself. And, despite the many encomiums on ancient literature, it is still true that, for the most part, the highest forms of useful mental activity date from the days of Christ. Kaulbach, in his famous cartoon of the Reformation, has gathered about the central figure of Martin Luther, with the open Bible in his upraised hand, the poets, painters, discoverers, and philosophers whose combined toil has constructed this edifice in which we live, which we call the civilization of the nineteenth century. Around the luminous figure of the Great Teacher might well be gathered nearly all who have combined to emancipate the body from servitude, the mind from thraldom, and the soul from superstition. Ary Scheffer has given us Christus Consolator and Christus Rememorator. The portrait of Christus Liberator is yet to be painted.

Of the matter of Jesus's discourses at this period of his ministry, the evangelists have given us but little information; enough, however, to indicate their general character. Six hundred years before, during the long Babylonish captivity, the prophets of God had kept alive the hopes of his people by promising the coming of a kingdom which should embrace all other kingdoms, and whose majesty time should not decay, nor earthly power break.* That the Jews had interpreted this of temporal dominion, and had pictured themselves the head of an empire outrivaling those of Cyrus and Alexander, will not seem strange to any one who considers that even to the present day there are many to whom the phrase kingdom of truth is a mysticism. Jesus declared that the time of which those prophets had spoken was fulfilled, and the kingdom they foretold was at hand. He urged the people to prepare for it by personal repentance of sin, and by believing in the glad tidings he had come to proclaim.† Rarely did he indicate either himself as the Messiah who was to inaugurate and maintain this new empire, or attempt to reveal the spirituality and universality which characterizes

* Dan. ii., 44; vii., 13, 14, 22, 27; Isa. ix., 6, 7; see also Micah iv., 7.
† Mark i., 15.

it. For the people were not yet prepared for this disclosure. His audiences, accustomed to the dry dialectics of the schools, were entranced by the teachings of one who applied the prophecies of the ancient records to living issues, and, with a heart warm from constant communion with his Father, appealed directly to the heart and to the conscience. They were proud of this Rabbi, whom they claimed as their own, and who had already acquired a metropolitan reputation.* They flocked to hear his new and striking interpretation of the ancient prophecies. He found ready entrance to all the synagogues. Wherever he went he was invited to read and expound the Scriptures.† Wherever he spoke he was received with applause.‡

A single exception indicated how fickle were the populace, how frail this popularity, and how the developed doctrine of a Messianic kingdom, to which the Gentiles should be welcome subjects, was to be received. In the course of his ministry he went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. The lesson for the day was the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. He read an extract from it, and sitting down, as was the custom of the Jewish Rabbi in expounding the Scriptures, proceeded to apply it to himself. "This day," said he, "is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. I have come to preach the Gospel to the poor; to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bound; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

The first impressions were favorable. But his quiet assumption of Messiahship offended some of the companions of his youth. They were piqued by his claims. "This the Messiah?" said they. Is not this Joseph's son? They began to indicate their dissent. The synagogue meeting was conducted in a manner much more free than our modern religious services. The people were accustomed to interrupt—to interrogate the speaker; to express approval or dissent. Je-

* John iv., 45. † Matt. iv., 23; Mark i., 39. ‡ Luke iv., 15.

sus perceived an indication on their part to demand some miraculous proof of his claim. But, though he was accustomed to refer to his miracles as a testimony to the divinity of his mission, he never degraded himself to the rank of a mere wonder-worker by performing them on demand. Instead, therefore, of complying with their wish, he declared to them that he should be rejected of Israel that he might be preached to the Gentiles. He reminded them that the divine blessing of the despised heathen was no new or strange thing; that the God whose benefactions they imagined they monopolized had, in the days of Elijah, passed by the many widows of Israel to feed a woman of Sarepta, and had left unhealed many lepers in Israel to cure Naaman the Syrian. To have their own Scriptures turned against themselves was more than they could bear. Doubtless, to their prejudice, he seemed irreverently to pervert the Word of God to profane uses. Unable to answer him, they responded with the customary argument of falsehood—violence. They drove him out of the synagogue. They would have cast him down from a neighboring precipice but that, by an exercise of that moral power by which single men have sometimes quelled a mob, he passed unharmed through the midst of them and went his way.*

This incident, however, did nothing to abate the general popularity of Jesus. Rather the reverse. Other cities were not quick to follow the example of one which had so ill a reputation as Nazareth. Unsuccessful persecution usually promotes the popularity of a public teacher. The people were more anxious than ever to hear the man who had produced so great a commotion among the Nazarenes. Christ prepared to extend his ministry. He left the hill-country and took up his residence in Capernaum. The synagogues could no longer

* Luke iv., 16–32. There is no assertion by the evangelist of any miracle, and, following the Gospel narrative, we neither doubt them when they are described, nor assert them when they are not. If there was a miracle here, it would seem to be the only case where Jesus exercised miraculous power for his own benefit.

hold his audiences. The Sabbath day was inadequate for his instructions. Still continuing to expound the Scriptures in the synagogue on the Sabbath, he began from this time to add thereto field-preaching through the week.* Already his fan was in his hand. Already, by the simple presentation of the Gospel, he was beginning to separate the chaff from the wheat.

This popularity of Christ's preaching was not of that superficial character which attracts a crowd, but leaves unchanged the life of the individual. Christ did not sweep his hand across the wires of the heart merely to draw from the soul the music of a momentary emotion. The man who changes the current of being in a single life is more truly potent than he who charms, but leaves unchanged many thousands. That Jesus really laid hold of the secret forces of the character, and, smelting over the raw material, recast the soul and life in a new form, is indicated by a single significant incident that occurred almost immediately after his arrival at Capernaum.

Walking out upon the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he came upon his old friends, Andrew, Simon Peter, James, and John. The father and brother of the latter were also with the party. Fishermen by trade, they had plied all night their avocation, unsuccessfully. They had left their boats, and were cleaning their nets upon the shore. They welcomed Jesus warmly, and, at his request, Simon left his work, and, getting into his boat, pushed it a little from the beach, that Jesus might make a pulpit of it from which to address the multitude who thronged about him. Christ's service, cheerfully undertaken, never entails loss. The discourse ended, Jesus proposed to Simon to push out into deep water for a draught. Unexpectant of success, he complied, and was rewarded with so great a quantity of fish that the net broke, and the overloaded boat began to sink. The sermon on repentance which Jesus had been preaching received in this incident new sanction.

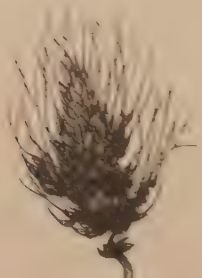
* Luke v., 1.

Peter expressed that conviction of sin which this pungent discourse had before produced; and, answering Christ's invitation to follow him and become fishers of men, these four companions left their boats, their nets, and their ingathered fish to Zebedee and his servants, to attach themselves henceforth indissolubly to Christ's person. It is no transient emotion of startled wonder that works such changes in life-plans as this, and we need no other evidence that the external miracle was but the outward sign of a moral power quite as marked and wondrous.*

Henceforth the house of Simon Peter afforded to Jesus his home,† for he had none of his own.‡ And of these four friends, three—Peter, James, and John—became his most intimate companions; witnesses alike of his transfigured glory and his night of grief,§ and filling in his heart the niches vacated by his unbelieving brethren.

* Matt. iv., 18–22; Luke v., 1–11. † Luke iv., 38.

‡ Matt. viii., 20; Luke ix., 58. It seems evident that he did not live with his mother (Mark iii., 21, 31). § Matt. xvii., 1; xxvi., 37.



CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

CAPERNAUM was chosen by Jesus, not as a delightful sylvan retreat, but as a centre for a life of the most intense activity. It was no rural village in a secluded dell. On the contrary, it was one of the chief cities of Galilee, and in the very heart of the most populous district of all Palestine. For effect upon the nation and on other peoples, it was far better located than Jerusalem.

About thirty-five miles,* as the bee flies, south of Mount Hermon's snowy peak, lie the limpid waters of what would be called in New England a pond, but which, in a land whose entire territorial area is not equal to that of Vermont, rejoiced under the somewhat pretentious title of the Sea of Galilee. This lake, whose shores the feet of Jesus have made sacred to innumerable hearts, is in size and shape somewhat similar to Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, Loch Lomond in Scotland, or our own Winnipiseogee.† Lying nearly seven hundred feet below the surface of the Mediterranean, in a valley excavated by volcanic action in the solid rock, and entirely sheltered by surrounding hills, its climate is and its productions were those of an almost tropical nature. The palm-tree flourished along its banks, and grapes and figs ripened in the warm sunlight ten months in the year. Even its fish are those of Central Africa. Upon the east the hills of

* Osborne's Palestine, p. 246.

† It is thirteen miles in length, from four to six miles in width, and one hundred and sixty-five feet in depth in its deepest part.—Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 362; Osborne's Palestine, p. 248; Josephus, Wars, iii., 10, § 7.

THE SEA OF GALILEE.

naked rock crowd close to the water's edge, forbidding all ease of access to the inhospitable wild which stretches, still but little known, east of the valley of the Jordan. But on

the north the upper Jordan pours its waters into the sea through a plain of great natural fertility, and on the west a beach of varying width, well watered by springs from the surrounding hills, afforded in the time of Christ a home for a busy population, who rejoiced, if we may believe Josephus, in a soil so fruitful that all sorts of trees could grow upon it, and a climate the nature of whose air was so well mixed that it agreed with all.* This beach widens toward the north into a plain of considerable size,† into which four mountain springs, whose affluence the heat of summer then seldom impoverished, pour their fertilizing waters, and whose rich and once well-cultivated soil produced a luxuriance of growth that gave to it its name of the Garden of Princes, in Greek Gennesaret.

No less than six cities‡ of considerable size were crowded along thirteen miles of coast-line on this western and northwestern shore. Upon this narrow strip of land, and on the surrounding hill-sides, the most fertile farms and vineyards of all Northern Palestine supported an industrious peasant population. The innumerable fish with which its clear waters abound afforded avocation for hundreds of fishermen, and supplied the country for many miles around. Lying directly on the route between Damascus and the Mediterranean, nearly all the commerce between the east and the west passed along its northern shores, by whose waters the modern caravan may still be seen wending its way, or halting for rest and refreshment. From the southern end of the western shore some warm mineral springs of real or fancied medicinal virtue afforded to the Roman special advantage for his much-esteemed bath, and constituted the Sea of Galilee the summer resort of the wealthy, the watering-place of all Palestine.

* Josephus, Wars of the Jews, iii.; x., 8.

† Four miles in length and three in breadth.—Rob. Lex., art. Γεννησαρετ.

‡ Tiberias, Magdala, Dalmanutha, Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, besides lesser villages, not one of which, Josephus asserts, contained less than 15,000 inhabitants.—Josephus, Wars, iii., 3, § 2. But allowance is to be made for the arithmetic of Josephus.

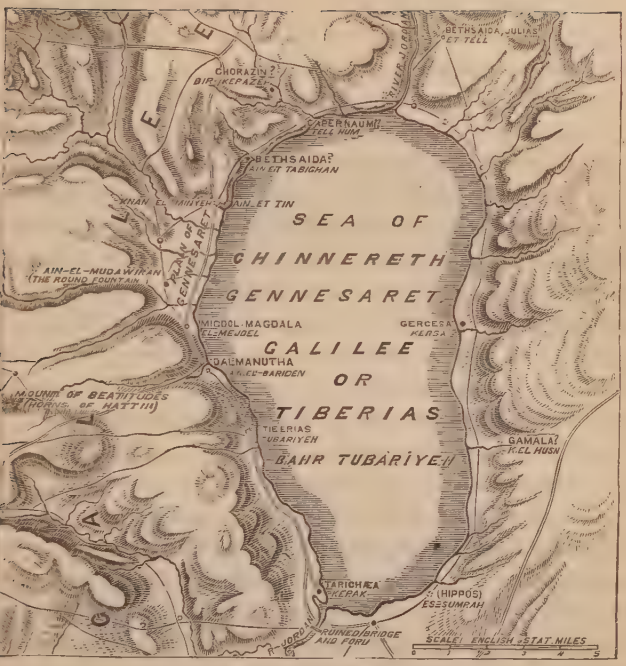
A little north of these baths Herod Antipas had built the city of Tiberias in honor of his master, the emperor of that name, and placing here a palace for himself, added to the attractions of nature those which the court, the soldiery, and the world of fashion afforded.

Along this shore, therefore, were gathered, not only in vegetation representatives of various climes, but in humanity representatives of every class and of various nationalities, every one of whom became in Christ's hands a symbol of the kingdom he had come to proclaim. Here the merchant opened his pack and displayed his wares, and here Christ compared the kingdom of heaven to a "merchantman seeking goodly pearls." Here the fishermen plied their avocation, and within sight of their nets he likened the coming kingdom to a "net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind." On this plain of Gennesaret, on whose soil still grows the tropical thorn-bush, and from whose surface crops out here and there the underlying basaltic rocks, the farmer turned the furrow and plowed in the seed, and in sight of his field of waving grain Jesus told the story of the sower, part of whose seed fell on the trodden path, part on the rocky soil, part among thorns, part in the fertile earth.* Close at hand was the palace of the Roman court, with all its military pomp and its surrounding world of fashion. Perhaps within sight of its walls was told the story of the marriage feast.† Thus within the radius of a few miles were gathered all classes—the farmer, the fisherman, the traveling merchant, the half-heathen tax-gatherer, the Roman soldier, and the courtesan that always follows the army and the court—all of whom flocked to hear this new teacher, that spake as never man spake, and from all of whom he gathered the nucleus of his future church.

Little now remains to tell the story of the glory of the

* Matt. xiii., 45, 46, 47–50, 1–8.

† Luke xiv., 16–24. This parable was told probably in Perea, but perhaps in the northern part, and not far from the shore of Lake Tiberias.



MAP OF GALILEE.

The topography of the Sea of Galilee is confessedly veiled in the greatest obscurity. For reasons stated hereafter, I conclude that there was but one Bethsaida, which was situated on the northern coast of the lake, near the entrance of the waters of the Upper Jordan (see ch. xxii., and note there). The invention of a second Bethsaida on the western coast has absolutely no geographical authority to support it, nothing but a laudable attempt to harmonize narratives which are quite as well harmonized without this invention. The location of Capernaum is more difficult. Robinson (Researches, vol. iii., p. 290) places it at Khan el Minyeh; Thomson (Land and the Book, vol. ii., p. 29), Andrews (Life of our Lord, p. 208), the Dean of Westminster, and Professor Owen (Palestine Exploration Fund Report, July 23, 1866), at Tel Hum. With this agrees its name—Tel Hum, signifying mound or ruins of Hum, Caper-Nahum, village of Nahum—and this is the view I have adopted. For note on the probable site of the Mount of Beatitudes, see chap. xvii.

past, enough only to give terrible significance to the warning words of Jesus, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin—woe unto thee, Bethsaida. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."

An occasional caravan is all that is left of the commerce between East and West which once enlivened these shores. A single crazy fishing-boat is the solitary survivor of the fleets that once covered the lake with their white sails. Of the cities which were once crowded along the western and northwestern shore of this most populous centre of the most populous district of Palestine, the town of Tiberias and the wretched little village of Migdel (ancient Magdala) are all that are left. The ruins that strew the plain of Gennesaret witness to the populousness of the past, but do not even clearly indicate the situations of the cities of Dalmanutha, Chorazin, and Capernaum hid behind a veil, which thus far the utmost attempts have been unavailing to pluck away. The hum of industry no longer echoes among these now deserted hills. The roads that Christ's feet pressed lie in ruins. Even vegetation has felt the curse of God resting on it; and, though the plain of Gennesaret still retains something of its ancient fertility, Nature has lost the ambition which Josephus poetically imputed to her. The fruits of the past are gone, and the uncultivated hill-sides are as barren of vegetation as of inhabitants. The traveler, cognizant of the past, and looking on the still, clear, cold, limpid waters of the lake, which alone retain their ancient glory, feels oppressed with a sense of desolation and a realization of the terrible judgments of God, which not even the awful grandeur and the romantic history of the Dead Sea are able to produce.

But at the time of Christ this now solitary scene was the heart of the most populous district and the busiest life in Palestine. From it as a centre, accompanied at first by his four friends, later by his twelve chosen disciples, Jesus prosecuted an itinerant ministry. With them he traveled in ever-widening missionary circuits until they reached the coasts

of Tyre and Sidon. By them accompanied, he preached in all the towns and villages of Galilee the Gospel of the advent of the kingdom of God.

This ministry to the soul was accompanied and greatly aided by his ministrations to the body; for Christ was not merely preacher, he was also physician.

To the present day there is in the Orient but little knowledge of health and disease. Medicine is an inscrutable mystery. The modern physician traveling through the Holy Land finds his tent surrounded by a crowd of wretched sick who clamor piteously for relief. The missionary physician is the most successful missionary; and when the preacher is not acquainted with medical science, he is most successful when accompanied by a physician, who by his cures gains access for his companion to many homes and hearts which would otherwise be closed against him. In this respect, as in all others, the modern church finds its highest success when it follows most exactly the example of its Master.

In the time of Christ still less than now was medicine a science. Nothing was known of anatomy; no profane hand had been guilty of dissecting the human frame. Less was known of the interior of the human body than is now known of the bowels of the earth. The nature of the vital organs was chiefly matter of shrewd surmise, or wild and often absurd hypotheses. Of the recuperative processes of nature, and the remedies with which God has in mercy strewed the earth, comparatively nothing was known. Plasters, poultices, bleeding, bathing, and anointing with oil were the current remedies. Some few herbs, taken almost indiscriminately, completed the pharmacy of the age. Almost any housewife of to-day is a better physician than the wisest scientist in the time of Christ.

What little medical knowledge the Jews possessed was borrowed from surrounding nations, and they had but little to lend. Moses, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," acquired perhaps some knowledge of their medical

art; but in Egypt medical science was quite empirical, and, monopolized for the most part by the priests, was artfully connected with their superstitions to support their order and enhance their power.* The Hebrews had acquired something of Eastern notions (they can hardly be dignified by the term knowledge) during the Babylonish captivity; but in Babylon there was no medical science, nor even a medical profession. The sick were placed upon the highway, and the passers-by inquired of them their complaints, and informed them of any remedies which they had chanced to know of as efficacious in similar cases. Greece had given to Palestine something of her philosophy with her language; but though in Greece, four hundred years earlier, Hippocrates had declared some of the fundamental principles of medical science, he had really done but little directly to render efficacious medical skill. The temples of Æsculapius still constituted at once the hospital and the medical college of Greece; the priests were the physicians; prayers, sacrifices, and incantations were the chief remedies; and accounts of cures that had been wrought, inscribed on tablets and suspended in the temples, were the literature of medical science.

But even from this scanty stock, the Jews, despising gentile philosophy, had borrowed but little, and that unconsciously and reluctantly. The laws of health were little known and less obeyed. Disease was regarded by the superstitious as the infliction of evil spirits, by the pious as the judgment of God. The former resorted to wizards and necromancers, the latter to fasting and prayer. Inasmuch as Nature is often her own best cure, the latter remedy often proved efficacious. Inasmuch as the imagination exercises a powerful influence on the body, the former sometimes worked wondrous cures.

* Enfield's Hist. of Philosophy, i., p. 87. The fact that Moses styles the physicians who embalmed Jacob the servants of Joseph, and that priests were never slaves, does not militate against this view, as supposed by Brown (Jewish Antiq., ii., p. 470), because the physicians were divided into classes, and the embalmers, dealing only with the dead, may not have belonged to the priestly order.

The physicians were for the most part medicine-men, who prescribed charms, amulets, and incantations more frequently than the few and simple remedies which their empirical knowledge afforded. A superstitious people regarded them with awe, the pious with aversion mingled with dread. To resort to them was esteemed, from the days of King Asa, an act of impiety.*

At the same time, their ancient records reminded the Jewish people of a time when God had worked marvelous cures in answer to the prayers of pious men. They remembered the Syrian captain, cleansed of his leprosy by the waters of the Jordan;† the sickness of Hezekiah stayed by the word of Isaiah;‡ the Shunamite's son restored to life at Elisha's request.§ They believed that the coming Messiah, with a restored theocracy, would restore these visible signs of the presence of God upon the earth.‖ They drew no such accurate distinction as we do between nature and the supernatural. The Hebraic mind was at once poetic and devout. Their religious faith attributed every operation of nature, and much of human action, directly to the interposition of God. It may at least be questioned whether their devout poetry was not wiser than our skeptical philosophy. Our circumlocutions they were unused to. "Providence," says the modern Church, "is opening the door to China, India, and Roman Catholic Europe." "The Word of the Lord," said the ancient Hebrew, "came unto Jonah, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me.'"¶ Our scientific investigations into secondary causes they were innocent of. Modern science explores the electrical phenomena of the clouds, and analyzes and describes them. Ancient piety was contented with the assertion, "The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven. Thine arrows also went

* 2 Chron. xvi., 12. For a fuller account of medical science, if that may be so termed which was then purely an empiricism, see authorities referred to in the Appendix. † 2 Kings v., 1–14. ‡ 2 Kings, xx., 1–11.
§ 2 Kings, iv., 17–37. ‖ John vii., 31. ¶ Jonah i., 2.

abroad."* At a time when thus all phenomena were attributed to divine interposition, the language of a devout recognition of God was the language of common life, and disease and health were especially accounted a part of the divine system of rewards and punishments, it is not strange that miraculous cures were accepted with a less questioning faith than is possible in the present age of philosophical and skeptical scrutiny. The correctness of that faith it is not our purpose to consider. The discussion of the supernatural belongs to the theologian, not to the historian. To the theological treatises, therefore, we refer such of our readers as wish to investigate the grounds of the Christian's faith in the Christian miracles.†

This work assumes throughout the historic credibility of the Gospel narratives. It is certain that no other hypothesis is consistent with such an assumption than that which attributes to Jesus supernatural powers. No other was suggested till long after his death. That he possessed such powers was admitted as incontrovertible by the Jews in their discussions in the Sanhedrim.‡ It was not denied by the heathen in their arguments against Christianity. The very endeavor of his foes to avoid the effect of his miracles is a concession of their belief that he performed them. The Pharisees attributed them to Beelzebub, the prince of devils;§ Celsus to magic;‖ the earlier Jewish Rabbis to his possession of the secret ineffable name by virtue of which they believed such miracles could be wrought.¶ Nor was it till the third century after

* See David's description of the thunder-storm, Ps. lxxvii., 16–18.

† For a discussion of the intrinsic possibility of miracles, see Bushnell's Nature and the Supernatural; for the best definition and description of those which Christ wrought, see Trench on the Miracles, Preliminary Essay; for a brief but admirable presentation of the modern question, and especially for a consideration of the historical evidences of the Christian miracles, see The Evidences of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century, by Rev. Albert Barnes, chap. v., and Appendix. ‡ John xii., 42; xi., 47. § Matt. xii., 24.

‖ Trench on the Miracles, Preliminary Essay, chap. v., § 2.

¶ Baden Powell on Evidences of Christianity, Essays and Reviews, p. 131, note.

his death that Hierocles first attempted to call in question the before undisputed fact that Jesus exercised supernatural powers and wrought supernatural cures.

It is certain that the account of those cures as given in the Gospels can not be explained by reference to any processes of nature with which we are acquainted.* It is true that Jesus sometimes, though rarely, employed some of the simple remedies of his day, as did his disciples after him. Clay mixed with saliva was a popular salve.† The Pool of Siloam was supposed to possess healing virtues.‡ Anointing with oil was a remedy in frequent use.§ The touch of the hand is even now sometimes employed in what is popularly known as animal magnetism;‖ a form of remedy which, however it has fallen into the hands of charlatans, science can no longer wholly ignore.¶ But, for the most part, Christ employed no medicines.

It is true, also, that some disorders are so far subject to the will of the patient that they are curable by a strong moral influence acting upon the system through the mind and brain. Such is the case with hysteria, some forms of paralysis, and more rarely with epilepsy. Lunacy, in its milder aspects and earlier stages, can often be temporarily calmed, though rarely, if ever, radically cured, by a mere word of command. But such is not the case with the diseases which

* Thus, for example, Dr. Schenckel, who seems to be desirous to retain belief in the Gospel narratives, and yet who seems to deny the possibility of miracles, supposes that the leper was probably substantially cured when he came to Jesus; attributes the healing of the centurion's servant, whom he confounds with the nobleman's son, to "extraordinary mental excitement;" the cure of the demoniacs to the "pure power of his (Christ's) Spirit," and the healing of the woman of an issue of blood to "the excitement of religious feeling."—Schenckel's Character of Jesus, vol. i., p. 120, 165, 181, 183. Even more extraordinary is the suggestion that the water was magnetized which the guests took for wine, and that the five thousand, being spiritually satisfied by Christ's truth, found thereafter sufficient food in such supplies as they possessed, which seems to be intimated as an explanation even by Lange.—Lange's Life of Christ, vol. ii., p. 139, 140.

† John ix., 6.

‡ Ibid., ix., 7. § Mark vi., 13. ‖ Matt. ix., 29; Luke iv., 40.

¶ See Quarterly Journal of Psychological Medicine, Oct., 1868.

Christ for the most part treated—deep-seated mania,* malarious fever,† chronic paralysis,‡ congenital epilepsy,§ long-continued ophthalmia,‖ or leprosy in any of its forms.¶ Twice, at least, he healed patients by a word whom he had never seen, and who were at a distance from him;** and on three occasions he restored even the dead to life.†† It is in vain to attempt to attribute such works to any natural laws with which we are acquainted.

The hypothesis that they are exaggerated accounts of works which might be so explained calls for no consideration from us, since we assume the absolute truth of the evangelical histories.

Still less satisfactory is the attempt to harmonize belief in those narratives with disbelief in the supernatural by classing them with the works of the thaumaturgist.‡‡ Jesus in no respect resembled the necromancers of his day. He muttered no incantations. He prescribed no charms or amulets. He never shrouded his cures in any of those mysteries which belong to the arts of the necromancer. He did not even employ the prayer which constituted the power of the ancient prophets, and subsequently of his disciples. He cured in his own name;§§ in open day, before all the people;‖‖ by a word;¶¶ a touch;*** a command;††† using no instrument like the rod of Moses‡‡‡ or the mantle of Elijah;§§§ never laboring in seeming uncertainty as the prophet whose prayer was three times

* Matt. viii., 28–34; Mark v., 1–20; Luke viii., 26–39; and see comments on this miracle, chap. xviii.

† John iv., 46–54; Matt. viii., 14–17; Mark i., 29–31; Luke iv., 38–39.

‡ Luke xiii., 11–17.

§ Matt. xvii., 14–21; Mark ix., 14–29; Luke ix., 37–42.

‖ Matt. ix., 27–30; Luke vii., 21.

¶ Matt. viii., 1–4; Mark i., 40–45; Luke v., 12–14.

** John iv., 46–54; Matt. viii., 5–13; Luke vii., 1–10.

†† Luke vii., 11–16; Matt. ix., 18, 19, 23–26; John xvii., 12–19.

‡‡ This appears to be the theory of Renan, if one who is so purely imaginative and so little rational can be said to have a theory.—Renan's Life of Jesus, chap. xvi.

§§ Matt. viii., 3. ‖‖ Mark ii., 2–5; ix., 25.

¶¶ Mark iii., 5. *** Matt. ix., 29. ††† John v., 8.

‡‡‡ Exod. vii., 19; viii., 5, 16. §§§ 2 Kings ii., 8.

repeated ere the breath came back to the widow's son;* never failing; never declining a case as too difficult for his word;† never, on the other hand, essaying it to satisfy public curiosity, gratify the love of the marvelous, or make good his Messianic claims. Though he sometimes referred to the works he had wrought in attestation of his mission, he never wrought them for that purpose; and to the perpetual clamor of the populace for miracles he was accustomed to reply that only a wicked nation sought for such evidences, and the only sign that should be given them was that of the prophet Jonah, whose presence, and the mere purity of whose doctrine in the city of Nineveh were the best attestation of his divine commission.

But we shall best perceive the nature and effect of Christ's works of healing by following him during one missionary circuit.

* 1 Kings xvii., 21–22. † See Luke ix., 40.

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CHAPTER XIII.

A MISSIONARY CIRCUIT.*

ON a Sabbath morning, Jesus, accompanied by his four disciples, goes into the synagogue of his newly-adopted home. As is usual, he reads a part of the Scripture for the day, and expounds it. As usual, he speaks, unbound by the traditions of schools, direct to the heart and the conscience; so that the audience are astonished, not at his doctrine, *i. e.*, the substance of his teachings, though such is the phrase in our English version of the Gospel, but at his teaching—that is, his method and manner. It impressed them with a strange power.†

Among those who have gathered in the synagogue is a man who is described as having an unclean spirit. The evangelists repeatedly mention cases of individuals whom they thus describe. For the most part, these persons seem to have been harmless; sometimes, however, of a violent and dangerous character.‡ The possession was often accompanied by physical disease — blindness, dumbness,§ epilepsy.‖ In one case it accompanied a disorder which was congenital, if not hereditary.¶ The victim seems usually to have been possessed of a double consciousness. His acts were unwitting. And when, by the word of Jesus, the devil was cast out, and he appeared clothed and in his right mind, he was with peculiar significance a new creature in Christ Jesus.

In the absence of any scientific diagnosis, it is often diffi-

* Matt. iv., 23–25; viii., 2–4, 14–17; ix., 2–13; Mark i., 21–45; ii., 1–17; Luke iv., 33–44; v., 12–32.
† Mark i., 22.
‡ Luke viii., 29.
§ Matt. xii., 22.
‖ Mark ix., 18, 20.
¶ Mark ix., 21.

cult to identify the diseases of which a mere passing and incidental mention is made in the New Testament. The language is popular, not scientific — the language of the first century, not of the nineteenth. This is particularly true of disorders of a mental type. It is but lately that mental hygiene has been made a subject of scientific study. An ambiguity, therefore, surrounds the cases so briefly described by the evangelist, which it is not easy to remove. It has been supposed by many that they are simply cases of what may be termed moral insanity, and it is certain that in many respects they resemble modern cases of that type of disorder. It has also been assumed that at the present day there are no cases of demoniacal possession; that this phenomenon passed wholly away with the period which it characterized, or that the evangelists were mistaken in their analysis of the disease; that, in asserting that these persons were possessed of devils, they borrowed the popular but unscientific ideas of their age, and that, in fact, these were simple cases of aggravated mental disorder.* It is by no means clear that this is any thing more than a purely gratuitous assumption.

* That the demoniacs were really possessed of evil spirits is the view generally taken by evangelical writers. So Townsend (Notes on the New Test., pt. iii., n. 23), Trench (On the Miracles, p. 125–136), Olshausen (Notes on Matt. viii., 28–34, § 10, p. 359–366), Alford (Greek Test., Matt. viii., 28–34), Conybeare and Howson (Life and Epis. of Paul, Am. ed., i., 298–300), Pressensé (Life of Christ, p. 314–317), Lange (Life of Christ, vol. ii., p. 127–131), Ebrard (Gospel Hist., p. 251). So, apparently, Ewald (Life of Christ, p. 119–120). Generally assuming, or conceding the assumption, that demoniacal possession has ceased altogether, or is now comparatively infrequent, they offer for this various explanations—that it was permitted then that the power of Christ in casting devils out might be made manifest (so Townsend); that the power of evil spirits has been broken by Christ (so Trench and Olshausen): that moral disorders are epidemic in eras, and that in that age of general degeneracy and open violence madness assumed a peculiar phase, and evil spirits manifested their power in terrible and extraordinary ways (so, substantially, Lightfoot, Alford, Pressensé). That moral insanity comes to the world as to individuals, in eras, see art. Demons in new Amer. Cyc.; and that it is produced and intensified by a feverish condition of the community, such as existed in the time of Christ, see Sir Henry Maudsley's Physiology and Pathology of the Mind p. 201, 209–211. On the contrary, the rationalizing critics

It is certain that the Scripture represents that there is a world of disembodied spirits, both good and bad; that they are not wholly separated from mankind, but exert at times a powerful influence upon them; that not only in past time certain individuals, as Saul, were affected by their presence, but that the Christian is still liable to be subjected to their often unrecognized influence, and that it is his duty to watch and pray, not only against flesh and blood, but also "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world."* It is equally certain that the phenomena of so-called animal magnetism indicate that at times individual men exert a strong influence in a direct manner, mysterious to us, upon the brain and nerve conditions of their fellows, acquiring an ascendency over them by means which they understand as little as it is understood by either the subjects or the observers. The hypothesis of Scripture, that evil spirits sometimes acquire a similar control over the bodies and minds of individuals, is indeed incapable of scientific demonstration, since it deals with existences which lie beyond the domain of scientific investigation; but it certainly accords with phenomena which still exist, and whose occult causes are confessedly not understood.

It may be confidently asserted that if there are no cases of demonstrable demoniacal possession in modern times, there are mental phenomena which the hypothesis of such possession better solves than any other. What more reasonable explanation has science to afford of the case of that nurse who begged to be dismissed from her mistress's service be-

assume that there is no such thing as demoniacal possession; that the demoniacs were persons "suffering from religious mania," whom Jesus succeeded in "composing and restoring" (Schenckel's Char. of Jesus, vol. i., p. 109), or lunatics whom a gentle word would suffice to calm (Renan's Life of Jesus, p. 233–235); a theory which reaches its climax in the hypothesis of Furness (Schenckel's Life of Christ, vol. i., p. 115), that the demoniac in the synagogue was aroused to religious frenzy by the excitement of the audience and the teaching of Christ, who thus first made the man crazy, and then cured him!

* Eph. vi, 12.

cause in undressing the child whom she devotedly loved an almost irresistible passion siezed her to tear it to pieces; or that young girl who, otherwise exemplary, seemed to herself to be impelled by a spirit to acts of incendiarism; or that young lady who begged with tears that she might have the strait waistcoat put upon her, that she might not be suffered to yield to the irresistible desire to kill some one; or that distressed chemist, of a naturally amiable character, who went himself to the asylum, that he might be prevented from indulging in a like unnatural propensity; or that epileptic peasant who sought to be chained that he might not slay the mother whom he loved; or that English gentleman, who only by the most strenuous act of the will resisted the horrid impulse to murder his own children;* or that respectable old lady who endeavored to strangle her own daughter without provocation; or that young lady of good parentage and education, who was driven on to acts of utter and abandoned shamelessness, impelled, as she thought, by the power of Satan, which she was incapable of resisting; or that young man who begged to be restrained by others from the commission of acts of violence, whose criminal nature he fully recognized, but from the commission of which he no longer seemed able to restrain himself.† Is it certain that these persons, all of whom recognized the difference between right and wrong, in all of whom a double nature seemed to dwell, in all of whom conscience and their own better desires remonstrated against the crime which they abhorred, but in all of whom there seemed to their own consciousness another spirit dwelling, whose instigations they were powerless to resist—is it certain that their own testimony that they were "impelled by a shade," or "prompted by Satan," is not more consistent with

* See these and other cases quoted in detail in Ray's Medical Jurisprudence, chap. vii., § 5, p. 202–260.

† See Sir Henry Maudsley's Phys. and Path. of the Mind, chap. iii., p. 306, 307, 309, 313–316. See also, for some similar cases, Forbes Winslow's Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind, p. 179–211.

reason, as it is certainly more consistent with Scripture, than the material philosophy which endeavors to trace the disorder to a disease of the brain, which the utmost microscopic scrutiny after death often fails to disclose? We are far from asserting that these and kindred cases are scientifically traceable to demoniacal possession. We do unhesitatingly assert that, in the present confessed ignorance of the causes of moral and mental disease,* such an hypothesis is not to be superciliously rejected.†

Certain it is that between the cases of demoniacal possession narrated in the New Testament and the cases of moral insanity collected in modern works upon that subject, there are striking resemblances. In both there is a clear recognition of the difference between right and wrong.‡ In both there is a double consciousness.§ In both there is the testimony of the patient that he is impelled by a power beside himself.‖ Both are accompanied sometimes by acts of violence; sometimes by attempts at suicide. Both are in their worst forms attended with epileptic convulsions.¶ Both are frequently manifested in periodic returns of disorder, with in-

* "The causes of insanity, as usually enumerated by authors, are so general and vague as to render it a very difficult matter to settle in the mind what they really are."—Sir Henry Maudsley's Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p. 197. The very title of Forbes Winslow's book, Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind, implies a like testimony.

† This view has been hinted at by Ebrard, Gospel History, p. 253. It has received the sanction in medical science of some leading minds—Aretæus in ancient times, and more recently Esquirol, who stands at the head of the French school, if not of all schools, as a student of mental disorder.

‡ Evidenced by their recognition of the holiness of Christ. See Mark i., 24. Compare Sir Henry Maudsley, Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p. 304, 305, 316–318.

§ Mark v., 6, 9. Forbes Winslow's Obscure Diseases of the Mind, p. 210, 211, and illustrations cited above.

‖ Compare Mark v., 9; ix., 18, with Ray's Medical Jurisprudence, p. 230, § 227; p. 234, § 233; Sir Henry Maudsley's Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p. 307; and Winslow's Obscure Diseases of the Mind, cited above.

¶ Mark ix., 17–22. "The most desperate cases of homicidal impulses are undoubtedly met with in connection with epilepsy."—Sir Henry Maudsley, Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p. 309.

tervals of sanity.* Both are sometimes traceable to willful self-indulgence in some form of sin as their provoking cause.† And both possess at times, in a remarkable degree, an appreciation of the character of persons with whom they are thrown in contact, and are sometimes peculiarly affected by the presence of persons of a pure and holy character.‡ The students who have noted these parallels will be variously affected by them. He who is determined to find a visible and material cause for every mental phenomenon will attribute the demoniacal possession of ancient times to physical causes, and the language of the Gospels to the unscientific character of the writers. He who believes, with Hamlet, that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy," will be prepared to believe with us, that the Scriptural interpretation of the influence of evil spirits affords the most satisfactory and the most rational explanation of phenomena which, to the present day, afford the students of mental disease their greatest perplexity.§

There had strayed, then, into the synagogue on this Sabbath morning, one of these unfortunates. We should have called him insane, and rightly, for doubtless he was mentally diseased. The Jews called him one possessed of an evil spirit,

* So in Mark ix., 17–22. Compare Winslow's Obscure Diseases, p. 45, and cases in Ray's Medical Jurisprudence, before cited, *e. g.*, § 219, 221.

† Compare, for example, the case of Saul with that of any of the cases cited in the notes already given.

‡ Mark i., 23; Luke iv., 33; Mark v., 2, 6, 7; Matt. viii., 28. Lange. Life of Christ, vol. ii., p. 112. The "penetrating insight" of a certain class of insane is a phenomenon almost universally recognized.

§ He who has read with care these pages will not understand me as attributing all insanity, or even all moral insanity, to the influence of evil spirits. The New Testament itself discriminates between lunatics and those possessed of demons (Matt. iv., 24). For a good description of the characteristics of demoniacal possession, see Olshausen's Commentary on Matt. viii., 28–34, § 10, p. 359–366; for a description of modern insanity in Syria, Thomson's Land and the Book, vol. i., p. 212, 213; for the ablest presentation of the Rationalistic view, Kitto's Bible Cyclopædia, tenth edition, article Demoniacs; for the ablest presentation of the opposite view, Trench on the Miracles, p. 125–136, and Alford's Greek Testament, Matt. viii., 28–34; for an able discussion of the whole topic, Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Demoniacs.

and rightly, for that was the secret cause of his disorder. He was powerfully affected by the teaching of Jesus. Such persons are often as appreciative of the truth as the most intelligent and strong-minded. He was yet more powerfully affected by Christ's mere presence. With that most wonderful moral intuition which often characterizes this class of persons, he perceived what the slow-minded Jews had not yet comprehended—Christ's Messianic character. At length he could keep silent no longer. His voice was heard breaking in upon the sacred service: "Let us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God."

For this class of persons there is even at the present day but little sympathy; so little that the latest author and ablest student on this subject writes, "To be a lunatic, as public sentiment goes, is to be cut off socially from humanity."* Especially is this true of the morally insane. Moral insanity is so akin to willful wickedness that only the most careful students of the disorder can discriminate between them. Still less was any sympathy extended to such persons in the time of Christ. Believed to be possessed by the devil, they were given over to his companionship. They were treated not as hopelessly sick, but as hopelessly wicked. That such a person should have ventured into the synagogue would be a ground of indignation; that he should venture to interrupt its sacred services would insure him no gentle expulsion. But Christ has a truer appreciation of the case, and a tenderer thought of it. To be possessed of an evil spirit awakens in him no horror or dread, but pity and compassion. In the general excitement which ensues he retains his calmness. He fixes his eye upon the maniac. The glance that smote Peter with remorse, and drove the soldiers backward to the ground, fastens the wandering gaze of the lunatic, and compels his heed. With a voice of authority Jesus speaks.

* Sir Henry Maudsley's Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p. 424.

"Hold thy peace and come out of him." The man falls in a fit to the ground. The imagination easily conceives, though the inspired pen has not recorded the scene of confusion which ensues.* The whole audience are thrown into the greatest confusion. Women are in consternation. Men rise in their places, the better to see this disturber of the service. Those in the immediate vicinity crowd about him. The whole service for the day is broken up. But the fit is transient. To the present day, these epileptic convulsions often inexplicably mark the recurrence of sanity in such cases. The man presently rises clothed with a new consciousness. His mind is clear. His moral nature is cleansed. The change is so marked that all the people note it. He is a new man. Wondering, they ask each other, Who is this new Rabbi, whom even evil spirits obey?

Such a man as this lunatic is always a public character in any community. Every man knows him. Even the children dog his footsteps in the streets. The cure of such a man electrified the city. All Capernaum was whispering the news before the sun had set.

Jesus meanwhile went with his four disciples to the home of Simon Peter. Simon was married. His mother-in-law was living with him. Near Capernaum, where the Jordan makes into the Sea of Galilee, are extensive marshes. The luxuriant vegetation of summer decaying here, breeds virulent malarious fevers, which often do not develop until fall and winter. Peter's mother-in-law lay sick with one of these malarious fevers. In the simple science of that day they were divided into little and great fevers. This appears to have been the only distinction known. Luke, himself a physician, characterized this as one of the more serious and aggravated type.† Peter had witnessed Christ's power over the demon in the synagogue. He appealed to him to cure his mother-in-law. Christ complied with his request. In the poetic language of

* It is, however, hinted at, Mark i., 27; Luke iv., 36. The whole account indicates an interruption and cessation of service.

† Luke iv., 38.

the day Jesus rebuked the fever, and, taking the patient by the hand, lifted her up. The disease instantly left her. The mere quelling of such a disorder usually leaves the patient weakened by its virulence. The period of convalescence is sometimes the most trying. Christ, however, not only expelled the fever, but inspired health and strength, so that she rose from her sick-bed and went about her customary household duties.*

Meanwhile the rumor of the scene in the synagogue had been extending. Sunset is a sign for the commencement of the greatest social activity in Palestine. The work of the day is over. Its intolerable heat has passed. The women gather at the wells to draw their water.† The men gather about their doors, or in groups at the gate of the city, for converse. The obligation of Sabbath rest, too, closes with the setting sun. By sunset the fast-spreading rumor began to bring forth its fruit. Christ's disciples were well known in the city. The miracle of the fishes had already been bruited abroad, and had sufficed to indicate Jesus's probable whereabouts. People began in crowds to flock to this new prophet.

A strange scene was then witnessed in the streets of Capernaum. A motley crowd besieged the house of Peter, and thronged the streets that led thither. Hither came the paralytic, bent together by long-continued disease; hither the unfortunate victim of epilepsy, seeking the relief which medicine never has been able to afford; hither the blind groped their way, following the sound of the crowd, or led by some sympathizing friend; hither, drawn by a strange attraction, came the lunatic in his half-consciousness of disease, hoping for a cure that he could not comprehend; hither were brought by friends some invalids borne on their mattresses; hither came parents bringing their children, with the still-lingering though hitherto oft-disappointed hope of love, or children

* Luke iv., 39.

† See Gen. xxiv. as an illustration of the antiquity of this custom.

THE HEALER.

supporting their aged and infirm parents, tortured by the rheumatic and neuralgic pains which a malarious country often produces in old age. And hither, in greater number than all the rest, were the multitude, drawn by curiosity to see a new Rabbi, and witness for themselves the wonderful works, the account of which they had heard, but only half believed; so that, as Peter looked upon the crowd that filled the narrow street and blocked up the entrance to his house, it seemed to him as though the whole city were literally gathered at the door.*

Of them all none went disappointed away. On some Christ laid his hands; to some he spoke the word of healing.† The lame threw away their crutches; the blind looked for the first time on the picture which the setting sun was painting in the west; the trembling hand was steadied, the withered limb made strong; they that were brought upon their beds bore them rejoicingly away; the burning heats of fever were extinguished; parched and fevered lips, moistened with the returning pulsations of healthy blood, spoke his praise; mothers clasped to their bosoms the children who returned to them from the very door of death; minds long darkened by disease felt the strange illumination of truth as the mystic clouds that obscured the past broke and scattered at his word; and slaves, long oppressed under the intolerable dominion of appetites and passions, clothed with demoniacal strength by devilish inspiration, burst the old fetters, and became again free men. Nor was it till the sun had sunk below the hills that environ the plain of Gennesaret, and the ruddy glow of the evening clouds was no longer reflected in the placid lake, that gradually the crowd dispersed, and left Jesus to a brief repose.

But not to sleep. Simple as seemed to be his remedies,

* Mark i., 33. There is reason to suppose that the Gospel of Mark was written largely under the influence and direction of Peter.—See Davidson's Introduc. to the New Test., vol. i., p. 138, and post; Alford's New Test., proleg., iii., § 2.

† Compare Luke iv., 40, with Matt. viii., 16.

they were self-exhausting. At every touch he felt virtue go out of him.* At every word of strong, mastering rebuke of evil spirits, he felt the struggle with the powers of darkness. The sight of so much distress moved him too with compassion. The deeper insight into that spiritual disease and death, of which this was but the type, intensified his feeling. His sensitive heart throbbed in sympathy with every disease he cured, with every pang which he alleviated. The effect upon his frame was so apparent, that to his disciples it almost seemed as though he had taken upon himself the diseases he had taken from others, and they instinctively applied to him the words of the ancient prophet, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."† This nervous exhaustion was too great for sleep, and, leaving at length the now slumbering city, he sought in the quiet repose which characterizes nature at night, and in silent communion with his God, that rest which every devout and poetic nature can at least partially comprehend, and which no other can.

Nazareth had expelled him from her borders; Capernaum besought him to remain. In the morning, Simeon, always a man of action rather than of devotion, found him in his retreat, and brought him the message that the people sought for him. Jesus, however, came not to heal, but to preach. He could not suffer his sympathies to deflect him from his mission; other cities needed his word no less. His ministry was to be an itinerant ministry, that no one place might claim him as its own. He commenced, therefore, his first missionary circuit among the cities of Galilee. Every where he preached the same gospel of repentance; every where his word was with power no less upon the body than upon the soul.‡ One of the cures wrought on this circuit added still farther to his widening reputation.§

* Mark v., 30; Luke vi., 19; viii., 46.

† Matt. viii., 17; Isa. liii., 4. ‡ Matt. iv., 23–25; Mark i., 36–39.

§ There is some doubt whether this cure was wrought at this time, or after the Sermon on the Mount. We follow Robinson's Harmony in placing it here.

In the absence of accurate observations, the one term leprosy was used among the Hebrews to designate various cutaneous disorders widely different in inherent character, but possessing some similarity in symptoms and external appearance.* In its worst forms, leprosy is alike awful in its character and hideous in its appearance. For years it lurks concealed in the interior organs. Gradually it develops itself. Spots of red appear upon the skin, chiefly the face; the hair of the brows, and lids, and beard begins to fall off; the eyes become fierce and staring; the voice grows hoarse and husky, and is finally quite lost; the joints grow quite stiff, refuse to fulfill their office, and drop off one by one; the eyes are eaten from their sockets. The patient, strangely insensible to his awful condition, suffers an apathy of mind that is scarcely less dreadful than the condition of his body. Corruption horribly precedes the grave, until at length the wretched victim of this most horrible disorder of any time or any country, "a handless, eyeless, tongueless wreck of humanity,"† finds his only refuge in the welcome tomb.‡

Universally regarded as suffering a disease as virulent in its contagion§ as in its immediate effects, the leper was shunned

* For a tabular statement of the disorders probably included under this general and popular name, see Copeland's Medical Dict., art. Psoriasis, § 7, note. Compare art. Leprosy, § 16, 17.

† Thomson's Land and Book, vol. i., p. 520. For a striking picture of the growth of leprosy, accurate as well as striking, see "The Leper," Willis's Sacred Poems, p. 21.

‡ For a full description of the leprosy in its various forms, or rather of the various diseases which share that name, see Smith's Bible Dict., art. Leper: art. Medicine. p. 302, *b.*; Jahn's Archæology, p. 209, § 189; Thomson's Land and Book, vol. ii., p. 518; Alford's Greek Test., Matt. viii., 4; Copeland's Med. Dict., arts. Psoriasis, Leprosy, and Ptyriasis. For the Mosaic description, see Leviticus xiii.

§ Whether leprosy is contagious or not has greatly perplexed both the divines and the physicians. Alford (Gr. Test., Matt. viii., 2) and Trench (On the Miracles, p. 174) deny that it is, and point to the cases of Naaman (2 Kings v.) and Gehazi (2 Kings viii., 4, 5) as evidence that it was never so regarded. The leper, they think, was simply ceremonially unclean. But that leprosy is now universally regarded by the people of the East as contagious, see Thomson's Land and Book, p. 517–519. The truth seems to be, that the milder

as one whose fetid breath bore pestilential poison in it. Universally regarded as bearing in his body the special marks of divine displeasure for intolerable sin,* his sufferings awoke no sympathy, but only horror. From the moment of the first clearly-defined symptoms, the wretched man was deliberately given over to death. He was an outcast from society. No home could receive him. Wife and children might not minister to him. Wherever he went, he heralded his loathsome presence by the cry "Unclean! unclean!" Men drew one side to let him pass; mothers snatched their children from before his path. To touch him — the horror-stricken Jew would sooner suffer the kiss of an envenomed serpent. No one ever thought to proffer succor to a leper; no physician ever offered him hope of health; no amulets could exorcise this dread visitation. A special token of the wrath of God, only God could cure it; only repentance of sin and the propitiation of divine wrath could afford a remedy.† No hand ever bathed the leper's burning brow, or brought the cooling draught for his parched lips. None ever spoke a word of sympathy to his oppressed heart. Society had built no hospitals for the sick, no lazarettos even for its own protection. And the leper, driven from the towns, dwelt in dismantled dwellings, or in caves and clefts of the rock, solitary, or in the wretched companionship of victims as wretched as himself.

One of these unhappy sufferers had heard of Jesus's fame. He believed, with the hope sometimes born of desperation, in the divine power of this new prophet. And naught but divine power could give to him relief. He disregarded alike the law, which excluded him from the city, and the horror he

forms of the disease (Med. Squamous Leprosy) were not esteemed contagious, but that the more aggravated forms (Med. Tubercular Leprosy) were thought to be so (Lev. xiii., 3–6). Whether it be contagious or not is still an unsettled question (Copeland's Med. Dict., art. Leprosy, § 27, 29; Psoriasis, § 5). It is certainly hereditary (Ibid.).

* Smith's Bible Dict., art. Leper. For illustrations of its infliction as a divine punishment, see Numb. xii., 10; 2 Kings v., 27; xv., 5; 2 Chron. xxvi., 19.

† 2 Kings v., 7.

must face to enter it,* and broke through all restraints to implore the word of healing from this inheritor of the power of Elijah. The crowd heard his cry, "Unclean! unclean!" and opened in superstitious dread to give him passage through. He cast himself at the feet of Jesus with the outcry of despairing imploration, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean!" The people had looked on him only with horror. Jesus was moved with compassion. They had drawn back that they might not receive the contagion of his garments. Jesus put forth his hand to touch him. They had echoed his cry, "Unclean! unclean!" Jesus said, "I will; be thou clean;" and in the instant of that speaking the leper felt the burning fever depart, and a new fresh blood, healed at its fount, course through his veins.†

This cure added to the fame of the new prophet. People flocked to him, not only from all parts of Galilee, but from beyond the Jordan.‡ All Palestine was moved by his presence. The synagogues were crowded with expectant hearers on the Sabbath, the streets with expectant patients in the week.§ To the people it verily appeared that one of the ancient prophets had risen from the dead.‖ To his disciples it seemed as though his whole service was to be a triumphal march.

But already the mutterings of the coming storm might be heard by an attentive ear. Physicians looked with jealous eye on one whose word outran in efficacy all their remedies. Rabbis liked not this new teacher whom all Galilee was following, deserting them to do so. Though as yet there was no open breach between them and him, they felt that he was not of their party, and preached not their religion. He was careless concerning their most sacred ceremonies. Neither he nor his disciples fasted.¶ He was indifferent concerning

* See Luke v., 12.
† Matt. viii., 2–4; Mark i., 40–45; Luke v., 12–16.
‡ Matt. iv., 23, 25.
§ Mark i., 45; Luke v., 15, 16.
‖ See Matt. xvi., 14.
¶ Luke v., 33; Matt. ix., 14.

baptisms and ablutions.* He spoke sometimes with an assumption which seemed to them blasphemy; which would have been blasphemy in the son of Joseph, but was not in the Son of God.† He taught what they regarded as lax views concerning the obligations and observance of the Sabbath;‡ and, worst of all, he preached, like his forerunner, a gospel of repentance, which included alike the Pharisee in its condemnation, and the publican in its proffer of pardon. Two incidents occurring about this time gave point to these criticisms.

On Jesus's return to Capernaum, a paralytic was brought to him to be cured. The crowd completely blocked up the entrance to the house, and the sick man's friends, climbing upon the roof, let him down into the court-yard. His disease was probably the effect of some self-indulgence, and Jesus pronounced his sin forgiven. The Pharisees complained that this was blasphemy; but Jesus replied that it made no difference whether he pronounced forgiveness, or by healing proved his power to forgive. He therefore bade the paralytic take up his bed and walk.§

Shortly after this he saw, at the receipt of custom, a tax-gatherer who was evidently interested in his ministry. This tax-gatherer Jesus invited to become his disciple. Matthew, or Levi (for by both of these names he seems to have been known), immediately accepted this invitation, and shortly after made a feast in honor of his new master. He invited a number of his old companions. That Jesus should sit down with publicans and heathen shocked the Jewish sense of propriety. They remonstrated. Christ replied that he was a physician, and came not to heal the well, but the sick; that he came to preach a gospel, not of righteousness, but of repentance, and that was properly preached to sinners. It is doubtful whether they fully understood him. Certainly they

* John iii., 25; ix., 2; Luke xi., 38. † Mark ii., 7; Luke iv., 21, 22.
‡ See Chap. XV.—The Sabbath Question.
§ Mark ii., 1–12; Luke v., 17–26.

did not appreciate a sentiment so simple, yet so sublime that we have not yet fully apprehended its significance.*

These incidents, however, indicated the battle that was approaching, though Jesus, who knew from the beginning what was in man, needed not the warning.† The halcyon days of Christ's life are drawing to a close. The clouds already begin to gather that darken the whole earth in the hour of his death. We approach the story of that bitter conflict which ended in the crucifixion and in the coronation of the King of Israel. To understand its nature, we must pause a few moments in our narrative to give a brief account of the character and condition of the Jewish Church and of Jewish religious philosophy.

* Matt. ix., 9–13. Whether this feast occurred at this time, or at a later period, as supposed by Robinson (Harmony, § 58), is uncertain, and not very important. Robinson's reasoning, however, is not conclusive. All the evangelists couple the feast with the call of Matthew. It would constitute the publican's natural inauguration of his new life. It is doubtful whether his old companions would have been invited guests at a later period, or would have accepted the invitation; and it seems probable that it preceded such charges as that of Matt. xi., 19.

† John ii., 24, 25.

CHAPTER XIV.

JEWISH RELIGION AND JEWISH INFIDELITY.

ALTHOUGH the Jewish Church preserved, in the time of Christ, a seeming unity, that unity existed only in appearance. It was divided into sects, which disputed for the mastery quite as fiercely as the Jansenist and Jesuit in the days of Pascal—sects as diverse in sentiment and as antagonistic in spirit. A brief account of these sects and their sentiments is necessary to a correct understanding of Christ's public ministry. Both commenced with the earnest enunciation by right-minded men of much-needed truths. Both degenerated by a rapid but consecutive progress into schools of dangerous errors. Each aggravated the falsehoods of the other by the pertinacity with which it persisted in its own. "There is no new thing under the sun," says Solomon. Polemics in the first century and the nineteenth are the same in essential character.

Pharisaism was to the Holy Land in the time of Christ what Roman Catholicism was to Europe in the days of Luther, or Puritanism to New England in the time of Edwards —the religion of the country. Historically, it was a protest against heathen corruptions. We have already sketched the progress of the national degeneracy of the Jews, and shown that its political decay was accompanied by a like decay in philosophy and religion. The Israelites, intermarried with foreigners, possessed in Samaria a religion in which the lean kine of heathenism had swallowed up the fat kine of Judaism, and yet remained as lean as before. The two Judaic tribes maintained with greater success the forms of their ancient

faith, but not without ingrafting on it something of heathen philosophy. War breached the walls which separated them from other nationalities, and the schools of the heathen entered at the breach. Carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar, they imbibed some Oriental ideas during the Babylonian captivity. Restored only to be overrun by Alexander the Great, they were subjected to the influence of the Grecian schools as well as to the dominion of the Grecian sword. Conquered by Ptolemy, their learned men, carried by him into Egypt, endeavored to combine the religion of Moses with the fanciful philosophy of a land as fertile in imagination as in agricultural products. Brought under the dominion of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, resolving to obliterate Judaism and substitute the religion of Greece, planted his own image in the Temple, commanded swine to be offered on the altar, and outrivaled the later cruelties of Nero against the Christians in the bitterness of his persecutions of the persistent Jew, many from fear adopted the forms of a philosophy which had no real charms for them.

Then it was the Pharisaic party arose. They constituted at first the purists of Judaism. They insisted on the divorce of the Jewish religion from heathen worship and philosophy. They insisted that nothing should be added to the Jewish religion by importation. They were the reformers of the second century before Christ. They braved, undaunted, the bitterest persecution that untempered cruelty, armed with unlimited power, could heap upon them. They passed through fires which made every nerve iron and every sinew steel. In this experience they were sustained by a faith at first devout, eventually fanatical, in the providence of God. They were his chosen people. They were assured through him of eventual victory. The events which seemed adverse were ordered by his will. To submit to the divine decrees was their first religious duty. Their foes were the foes of God, whose power he would surely break, and whom, at the last, he would miserably destroy. In the persecutions of the present they con-

soled thewselves with expectations of the future. The hope of a Messianic kingdom cheered them in every disaster and defeat. Thus, out of their sufferings they evolved the two characteristic features of their creed—faith in immortality, faith in the absolute decrees of God. All things were ordered by his will. Nothing, therefore, went wrong. All things that seemed so to do he would righten in the future.

But in the maintenance of this faith they were met at the outset by an argument which sorely perplexed them. They borrowed their hope from the future. But when they were asked for the evidences of immortality in the laws of Moses, they were compelled to confess that those laws contained no clear revelation of any future state. On the contrary, it seemed in the main to represent God's government as administered by temporal rewards and punishments. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fat of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword,"* was Isaiah's correct epitome of the system which the Jewish law afforded. If there were intimations of immortality which Christ afterward discovered, they were merely intimations. Nowhere was Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" categorically answered.

Nor were there any commands to prayer. The later books of the prophets, indeed, partially supplied this seeming omission; but it certainly was omitted from the Mosaic statutes. The Pharisees did not comprehend that these statutes were the civil constitution of a state. They did not perceive that considerations drawn from immortality are not the proper sanctions of civil laws. They did not understand that prayer is a privilege rather than a duty; to be instinctively demanded by the soul rather than enjoined upon it by positive enactments. Pressed by their opponents, who demanded authority for the faith which they rightly held, but the foundations whereof are in the intuitions of the soul rather than in the statutes of a commonwealth, they invented a singular

* Isaiah i., 19, 20.

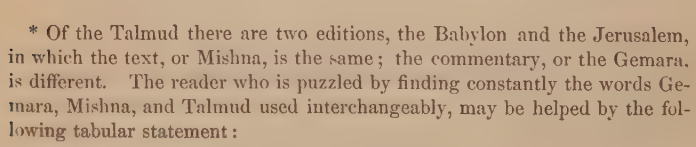
fiction. They asserted that during the forty days which Moses spent with God in the mount, Jehovah gave him an additional revelation. In this he promulgated the doctrine of a future life and the duty of prayer. In this, too, he afforded an authoritative interpretation of all the precepts of the written law. This additional revelation had been, they said, subsequently handed down from father to son. It constituted a body of traditions of equal binding force with the Scriptures which accompanied it.

Such a doctrine, once incorporated in their religion, opened wide the door to corruption. The oral traditions soon overgrew the written Word. The laws of Moses occupy less than a fifth part of our Bible. The Babylonian Talmud occupies twelve large folio volumes. The traditions became to the Pharisees what in the Middle Ages the decrees of the Church and the literature of the fathers were to the Romanist. The Scriptures took a subordinate place. Heaven was depicted as a school of Rabbis, God himself the chief Rabbi. The words of the scribes were declared to be more delightful than the words of the prophets. "The Bible is like water, and the Mishna like wine," became a Pharisaic proverb. To read the Scriptures was considered as dangerous for the common people in the time of Christ as in the time of Luther. To read them, except in the light of the authoritative interpretation, was equivalent to atheism. Nor was it only the place of the Scriptures which this oral tradition usurped. It became the exclusive object of study among the learned of the land. To investigate Grecian philosophy subjected the student to an anathema. To teach a single precept of the law demanded the pupil's eternal gratitude; to forget a single point of doctrine endangered his soul.

At the time of Christ this Rabbinical law was still mainly, if not exclusively taught by word of mouth in the schools, and handed down by successive Rabbis from generation to generation. Great sacredness attached to it; great mystery enwrapped it. It was forbidden to be written. When at

last it was reduced to writing, a curse was pronounced on whoever should translate it into any heathen tongue. To teach it to a woman, a child, or a gentile was a profanation. In the second century after Christ the first written compilation of this oral law was effected. Three centuries later the commentaries of the scribes were added. The former is termed the Mishna. The latter is called the Gemara. The two combined constitute the Talmud. The prohibition of its translation was a work of supererogation. No one is ever likely to attempt to exhume from this valley of dry bones more than a few single anatomical specimens. There is no book about which more has been written and less is known than this Jewish Talmud.* Like the religion of which it is the literature, it is a singular mass of contradictions, of wisdom and folly, of philosophy and of wild Oriental imagination, of pure ethics and of loose and pernicious casuistry. Let any one attempt to analyze the religious literature of Europe; let him compile in one work the pure spirituality of Madame Guyon and the abominable licentiousness of the miracle plays; the high-toned morality of Pascal and the casuistries of Escobar and Reginald, which he so indignantly protests against; the religious philosophy of Augustine, the father of modern theology, with the disquisitions on angelology by Thomas Aquinas, and he will have proposed to himself a task somewhat similar to that which is essayed in the attempt to analyze the Talmud, a compend of the Jewish literature of many centuries—"the sweepings of the intellectual thresh-

* Of the Talmud there are two editions, the Babylon and the Jerusalem, in which the text, or Mishna, is the same; the commentary, or the Gemara, is different. The reader who is puzzled by finding constantly the words Gemara, Mishna, and Talmud used interchangeably, may be helped by the following tabular statement:


The Talmud is composed of
The Mishna, or oral law, first written in the 2d century after Christ.
Gemara, or commentaries of the scribes, of which there are two, comprising, with the Mishna,
Jerusalem Talmud, 4th century.
Babylon Talmud, 6th century.

ing-floor of Judaism, accumulated during some centuries, and consigned to the Talmudic garner without any effectual winnowing.*

That it contains some clear enunciation of divine truth is not to be denied. Scattered through its pages are many maxims which embody the spirit of Christianity. In a negative form the golden rule is there found, "Thou shalt not do to thy neighbor what is hateful to thyself." The law of love, enacted under Moses and repeated by Christ, it reiterates—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Secret charity it commends: "He who gives in secret is greater than Moses himself." Humility and self-abnegation it commends: "Whoever runs after greatness, greatness runs away from him; he who runs from greatness, greatness follows him." Interior sins it rebukes: "Pride is like idolatry." Immortality it proclaims: "This world is like an inn, the world to come like home." It even gives a glimpse of the Fatherhood of God: "If we are called servants of God, we are also called his children." The parallels of these maxims in the teachings of Christ and his apostles will readily occur to the reader.† Remembering, however, that the Talmud was not compiled till several centuries after Christ; remembering, too, that it has borrowed, without hesitation and without credit, from the literature of the East and from the philosophy of Greece, the suspicion that its compilers have put some of the words of Christ into the mouths of the ancient Rabbis is not without at least a seeming foundation.

But these maxims are as single stars shining in a murky night. They lie like nuggets of gold imbedded in masses of quartz. For the most part the theology is puerile, the imagination extravagant, the morals pernicious, the very language often so indecent as to forbid translation. We have depicted the best side of the Talmud. Its worst aspects hide in an ob-

* S. H. Cowper in Journal of Sacred Literature, Jan., 1868, p. 257.

† Matt. vii., 12; xxii., 39; vi., 2–4; Luke xiv., 7–11; Col. iii., 5; Heb. xi., 13, 14; John xv., 15.

security from which no hand will ever be willing to drag them to the light. Those portions which throw light on the teachings of Christ only by the contrast they afford constitute the mass of Talmudical literature.

It is impossible to comprehend the power and the beauty of Christ's teaching without some knowledge of these instructions of the Pharisees as subsequently embodied in the Talmud, but it is difficult to afford that knowledge without wearying the reader with a tedious enumeration of petty details. Their interpretations of Scripture were singularly fantastic. From the text "Thou hast fashioned me behind and before," they deduced the conclusion that Adam was made with two faces, and that Eve was made by sawing him asunder. Their original discussions surpassed, if that were possible, their scriptural commentaries. "If a man *should* be born with two heads, on which forehead should he bind the phylacteries?" is a sample of the subjects of their most serious discussions. In ceremonial instructions the Pharisaic Rabbis were punctilious. To eat an egg laid on the first day of the week was seriously interdicted, because, presumably, it was prepared in the order of nature on the Sabbath. But to personal morals they were for the most part profoundly indifferent. On the feast of Purim the pious Jew was recommended "to make himself so mellow that he shall not be able to distinguish between 'Cursed be Haman' and 'Blessed be Mordecai.'" From the Mosaic provision of divorce,* the conclusion was deduced that a man might divorce his wife whenever he found a woman handsomer and more to his liking, since his wife no longer found "favor in his eyes." On matters in which the confession of ignorance is the height of wisdom, the scribes spoke with the most unblushing assumption of knowledge. They detailed with minute particularity the location, magnitude, and physical aspects of heaven and hell, and the classes, qualifications, offices, and conduct of the angels and demons. Concerning truth, duty, and practical

* Deut. xxiv., 1.

righteousness, the masters of the schools, with some notable exceptions, were almost, if not altogether, silent.* And while it is certainly true that some of the Rabbis inculcated a pure and high-toned morality, more frequently the spirit of even the purest ethics was purely mercenary. "Consider for whom thou dost work, and what is thy master, who will pay thee thy wages," if not the highest, was certainly the most common incentive to such virtues as were occasionally commended by the purer portion of the Pharisaic party.†

Of this literature, the scribes, of whom such frequent mention is made in the Gospels, were at once the authors and expounders. They took the place, though they did not fulfill the functions of the ancient prophets. They copied the law, wrote commentaries upon it, taught the Scriptures and the oral traditions in schools established throughout the land, engaged with each other in fruitless and often heated discussions, and were, in short, the theologians and literati of an age whose literature and theology was such as we have described.

Pharisaism, like its literature, was a composite of contradictions, singular and perplexing to those who are unmindful of the self-contradictions of human nature, who forget that both Tetzel and Fénelon were Roman Catholics, both Barebones and Robinson were Puritans. Among the Pharisees were not a few who, possessing a partial appreciation of the spiritual significance of the law, were in some measure prepared for at least the ethical teachings of Jesus. Such were the young lawyer who declared that love to God and man was the first commandment of the law;‡ the scribe who said that to love

* See Stehlin, vol. i., p. 21–103.

† A recent article on the Talmud in the Quarterly Review, reprinted in Littell's Living Age, January 4, 1868, has presented with great ability, but still greater partiality, the favorable aspects of this literature. A truer portrait, though one less striking, is given in the Journal of Sacred Literature for January, 1868. For English authority consulted in the preparation of this brief sketch, and to which the reader is referred for fuller information, see Appendix. See also a measurably full portraiture of the literature and the literati in Pressensé, Life of Christ, book i., chap. iii., § 5, 6. ‡ Luke x., 25–28.

the Lord with all one's heart, and one's neighbor as himself, was more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices;* the rulers who believed on Jesus, but dared not profess his name for fear of the Jews;† the Nicodemus who came to him by night;‡ the Joseph of Arimathea, in whose tomb he was buried;§ perhaps the Simon at whose house he sat at meat;‖ and, in later days, the Gamaliel who resisted in the Sanhedrim the policy of persecution,¶ and those of the sect of the Pharsees who, retaining their reverence for the Jewish law, yet joined the Christian Church.**

But this party was neither strong in numbers nor in courage. They possessed some appreciation of the truth, but dared not suffer for it. They were inclined to welcome Jesus as a new and rare teacher, but dared not avow themselves his disciples.†† They took no part in his condemnation, but, if they were present, dared not openly oppose it.‡‡ Their feeble conservatism was overborne by the intolerant zeal of the sect whose principles they were far from justifying, but with whom, for ecclesiastical and political reasons, they were inseparably identified. The Romish Church had its Erasmus and its Fénelon; the Pharisaic party its Nicodemus and its Joseph of Arimathea; but neither can be accepted as types of the party to which they severally belonged.

In spite, then, of some pure spirits in the Pharisaic party, and some pure precepts in their inculcations, the characteristic feature of their religion was a formalism which thinly covered a spirit in appearance intensely religious, in fact thoroughly opposed to that spirit of love which Moses, as well as Christ, declared to be the end of the law. Accounting themselves the children of God, the Pharisees were nevertheless compelled to yield allegiance to the Gentiles, whom they regarded as servants of the devil. Thus the intense but narrow

* Mark xii., 33. † John xii., 42. ‡ John vii., 50.
§ Mark xv., 43. ‖ Luke vii., 36. ¶ Acts v., 34–39.
** Acts xv., 5. †† John vii., 50–51.
‡‡ Compare Luke xxiii., 50, 51, with xxii., 70, 71.

patriotism which summoned them to resist the outrages of Antiochus degenerated into an embittered pride, which found expression in the declaration of the Talmud, "A single Israelite is worth more before God than all the people who have been or shall be." Accounting themselves the servants of the Most High, by an easy transition they assumed to be the sole authoritative exponents of his will. Thus the faith which sustained them in the hour of early trial, in later comparative prosperity degenerated into a fanaticism that denounced every antagonist as an enemy of God. Possessing a zeal which flamed out against the corruptions imported from the Gentile world, and resisting the persecutions of a cruel king even unto death, they knew not how to extend to others the comparative religious liberty they had secured for themselves, but misdirected their energies in compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, not to the pure faith of their fathers, but to the puerile creed of the degenerate sons. Setting themselves at first apart from the world by a real and earnest adherence to principle, and adopting as their party name the word Pharisee, or Separatist, after their mission had been accomplished, and the faith for which they at first contended had become in the main the faith of the nation, they still remained separatists, not by the superiority of the principles which they maintained, or the purity of the life which they led, but by their exhibitory piety and their lifeless orthodoxy. They fasted and prayed with great regularity and precision, but generally in public and for applause. They paid tithes of all they possessed, but their alms-giving was no free-handed utterance of loving hearts, but a formal though scrupulous observance of an ancient law. They manifested the religion they professed, not by engraving the divine precepts on their hearts and writing them in their lives, but by inscribing them on pieces of parchment which they bound upon their foreheads, and by engraving them upon the lintels of their doors.

Even their belief in immortality degraded their conception

of virtue. Religion became a trade. They had no idea of serving God for naught. "Three things," so ran their proverb, "will make thee prosper—prayer, alms, and penitence." They kept strict accounts with Jehovah. They paid for their sins by their fastings. They earned the kingdom of God by their observance of his ritual. That they neglected his spiritual laws perhaps rarely or never occurred to them. So that they made long prayers, they devoured widows' houses with untroubled consciences; for their hypocrisy was unconscious hypocrisy, and they hid not less from themselves than from others the selfishness of their hearts by the seeming piety of their lives.

Pharisaism was, we have said, the religion of Palestine. Sadduceeism was its infidelity. Like its adversary, a system of error equally pernicious though less fantastic, it grew in like manner from a simple and sublime truth.

Three hundred years before Christ, Antigonus, revolting from the mercenary spirit of the Pharisees, already beginning to develop, enunciated the sentiment, "Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve their master without a view of receiving a reward." This sentiment his followers perverted in the following century into the doctrine that divine justice is administered in this present life, and that there is no ground to hope for a reward or to fear punishment in the life to come. They denied the Pharisaic fiction of an oral tradition. They depreciated, if they did not reject, the historical and prophetical books of the Old Testament. The Pentateuch alone they accepted as the undoubted word of God. Belonging for the most part to the priesthood, the maintenance of the ritualism of the Mosaic dispensation was indispensable to the preservation of their order. And their faith was commensurate with their interest. When, therefore, their opponents pressed them with the question, "Where will you find authority for the doctrine of the future state if you do not accept the added revelation of tradition?" they

replied, For it there is no authority, and the doctrine is not true. Thus, as the Pharisees' faith in immortality begot the oral tradition, so the Sadducees' repudiation of the oral tradition begot disbelief in immortality.

From this beginning of conflict grew up a system mainly of negations, to be interpreted, therefore, mainly by the Pharisaic system of which it was the antagonist. Whatever the Pharisees believed, the Sadducees denied. The Pharisee laid great stress upon divine rewards and punishments. The Sadducees demanded that virtue be practiced for its own sake. The Pharisee dwelt upon the immortality of the soul, and, to sustain his faith, resorted to the fiction of an oral tradition. The Sadducees denied the authority of aught but the Scriptures, and repudiated the doctrine of immortality which admittedly was not contained in the Mosaic law. The Pharisees developed a fanatical faith in a fatalistic Providence. The Sadducees, at first insisting on the free will of man, ended by denying the reality of divine control, and by the declaration that man is the sole master of his own fate. The Pharisee built up a petty but vigorous ceremonial. The Sadducees preached a loose and easy morality, the motto of which was, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The Pharisee was an intense, but bigoted and exclusive Jew. The Sadducee was a cosmopolitan, quite ready to affiliate with the Gentile if place, or power, or wealth could be obtained by the compromise. The Pharisees were the teachers of the people, and secured their reverence by the austerity of their life and doctrine. The Sadducees comprised more frequently the priestly class, and, never speaking from or to the heart, consisted almost wholly of men of cold and heartless culture. The scribes and Pharisees were the degenerate sons of the prophetic order; the Sadducees the corrupt descendants of the sons of Levi: the Pharisees intense religionists; the Sadducees cynical and scoffing philosophers.

The contest between them was not confined to wordy arguments. It repeatedly broke out in open violence. It

plunged the nation into civil war. It resulted at the last in the Jewish subjugation by the Roman legions. Like the long conflict between Protestant and Romanist, that desolated France, it combined the rancor of a conflict of ambition for political power with the embittered hate of a perverted conscience struggling for religious supremacy.

Yet, in the time of Christ, both made common cause against him. To destroy them both was in part his mission. That he should have denounced so earnestly the formalism of the Pharisees, and said so little of the infidel philosophy of their opponents, may seem singular. It has even been accounted as an indication that he was indifferent to the one, opposed only to the other. His comparative silence, however, warrants no such conclusion. He perceived that Sadduceeism would die with the cessation of the conflict on which it fed. Like all negations, with the overthrow of the errors it combated, it has perished of inanition. Not a remnant of this once haughty and powerful sect remains. Not a trace of their influence has survived their entombment. Not a line even of their literature has been preserved to bear witness to their philosophy; and their character and teachings can only be gathered with much research, and in much uncertainty, from the casual notices in the Gospels, and from the description which is afforded of them by their foes.

Any comprehensive account of the religious sects in the time of Christ must include a brief mention of the Essenes. They were the Shakers of their age. They lived in communities by themselves. They discouraged marriage. The higher orders forbade it. They maintained an absolute community of goods. They abhorred alike war, slavery, and commerce. Their lives were regulated by an inflexible system administered by an absolute ecclesiastical superior. The hours of prayer, meals, labor, were all fixed by rigorous rules. Their doctrine was simple, but mystical. Their morals were pure, but austere. Their religious forms were observed with a rigor which even surpassed that of the Pharisees, but they

were accompanied with a life of practical virtue which rarely found a parallel in the Pharisaic life. They were initiated into the order by a secret service and a novitiate of three years, and were, at its close, bound by the most solemn oaths "to observe piety, justice, obedience, honesty, and secrecy." For violation of his oath, the offender was excommunicated. Having sworn that he would receive no food save from his own sect, and driven by excommunication from their table, he perished miserably of starvation. Four thousand of these ascetics lived in settlements of their own, chiefly in the wild region which borders the Dead Sea. They did not intermingle with their own countrymen. They exerted no influence upon the religious opinions and practices of their neighbors. They never seem to have come in contact with Christ. They are never once mentioned by him or his biographers; and this brief mention of them is here recorded rather that the reader may have a complete picture of the various religious sects which characterized Judaism, than because a knowledge of their habits casts any special light upon the life of Jesus.*

From this brief but seemingly necessary digression, we return to the story of Jesus's life.

* De Quincey has soberly maintained, and with some acumen, that the Essenes were no other than the disciples of Christ, and that they were misrepresented by Josephus, through whom most of our knowledge of them comes. —De Quincey, Historical and Critical Essays, vol. i., The Essenes. This view has never found a second advocate; and though there are some points of resemblance in life and doctrine, the antagonism in spirit between the excessive bondage of the one and the freedom of the other is too strongly marked to admit of being interpreted away. See, for a good outline of this contrast, Plumptre on Christ and Christendom, p. 164, note.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SABBATH QUESTION.*

THE controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees commenced on the Sabbath question.

Moses had established in the wilderness, by God's direction, one day in seven as a day of rest. He had placed the provision for its observance in the fundamental law—the Hebrew Constitution. It was engraven therewith on the tables of stone which made sacred the inner court of the tabernacle. It was written therewith on the stuccoed monument which Joshua built at Mount Gerizim. There is even reason to suppose that it antedates the long Egyptian captivity, and that in its establishment Moses was but reinstating a patriarchal institution which had fallen into disuse, almost into oblivion.†

To a nation of slaves who had known only the drudgery of toil, a day of rest was truly a godsend. It was a memorial day. It reminded them of their grievous bondage and of their divine deliverance. It was a prophetic day. In the weary wanderings of the wilderness, its constant recurrence pointed them to the promised rest in the land into which the God of their fathers was bringing them, and to that other and more perfect rest of a sweet immortality, of which it was the vaguely apprehended shadow. On this day that toil which was the duty of all other days was solemnly forbidden. The nation not only might rest—it must. Domestic life was relieved of all but the most inevitable toil. The merchant's caravan bivouacked for a day of repose. The

* John v.; Matt. xii., 1–21; Mark ii., 23–28; iii., 1–12; Luke vi., 1–11.

† For a statement of the reasons on which this opinion rests, see Dr. Tayler Lewis in Lange on Gen., p. 196–198.

* THE POOL OF HEZEKIAH.

busy porter laid down his burdens. The plow rested in the half-finished furrow. No hand might drop the grain in the opened ground, or gather the ripened and waiting harvest. Not even a fire might be kindled beneath any roof in Palestine. A genuinely democratic day it was—the poor man's special charter of liberty. Mistress and maid claimed alike its privileges and felt alike its obligations. The veriest slave in all Palestine felt the shackles fall from his limbs. The very cattle breathed that day the air of unwonted freedom. The curse of the law, By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy daily bread, was lifted on this holy day from all the wearied toilers of the brier-bearing earth.*

This day of rest for the body was made available for the spiritual benefit of the soul. It was a day of holy convocation.† The sacrifices of the Temple were doubled.‡ The shew-bread was changed.§ The inner court of the Temple was opened for solemn services.‖ The Levites took this occasion to instruct the people in the law.¶ The prophets seized on this day of the people's rest for their day of most advantageous labor.** At the same time, the idea of rest, and even recreation in its true significance, was the prominent idea in the early Jewish observance. It was no day of burden and of bondage. A memorial of emancipation, it was itself an emancipator. It is true, it was kept holy to the Lord; but to the ancient Jew holy day and holiday were synonymous, and festal celebrations were enjoined as well as prayer and praise. On this day of joy and gladness both were commingled. The pious Jew welcomed its return with gladness.†† He reflected on the works of God with deep and earnest thankfulness.‡‡ He gave utterance to his emotions not only in the song of praise in the sanctuary, but by festal

* Exod. xx., 8–11; xxiii., 12. † Exod. xii., 16; Isa. lxvi., 23.
‡ Numb. xxviii., 9. § Levit. xxiv., 8. ‖ Ezek. xlvi., 1–6.
¶ Compare Deut. xxxi., 11–12, with Acts xv., 21; xiii., 14, 15.
** See 2 Kings iv., 23. †† Psalm cxxii., 1.
‡‡ Psalm xcii. Title, A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day.

scenes at home.* David remembered it as a day of joy and praise.† Hezekiah reinstated it in the reformation, with the Passover, by a national feast of exuberant gladness.‡ Nehemiah dissuaded the people from their tears, and commanded them to keep it as a day of joyous feasting.§ Hosea threatened the Jews with its deprivation as a judgment for their iniquities.‖ And the later Jews, while setting apart some portion of the day to religious observances, spent the remainder "in festal cheerfulness, in receiving and returning the visits of friends, and in dances, and games, and juvenile exercises."¶

In the degeneracy of the nation this day fell into disuse. The industries of the world trenched upon it. Trade was reestablished. Business was resumed. The almost insuperable difficulties of observing the day while in Babylonish captivity obliterated it from the Jewish calendar, almost from the Jewish memory. This day, which God had established as a covenant sign between him and his people, perished when the covenant broken by them in reiterated transgression bound him no longer.

The Pharisaic party, protesting against the usurpations of heathendom, undertook to reinstate the Sabbath. In this respect they followed the example which had been set them by Hezekiah, Nehemiah, and the later prophets. The reform was timely. But they did more than reinstate it; they made it the object of an idolatrous regard, the central feature in a religion wholly ceremonial. The brazen serpent, which had saved Israel in the wilderness, served Israel in the promised land as an idol.** The Sabbath which Moses had established as a sign of covenant between God and his ancient people became more important in the estimation of the Pharisees than the covenant itself. They cared more for the tables of stone than for the law which was engraved thereon. "'Re-

* Levit. xxiii., 2, 3. † Psalm xlii., 4. ‡ 2 Chron. xxix.
§ Neh. viii., 9–13. ‖ Hosea ii., 11.
¶ Priaulx, Quæs. Mos., p. 28. ** 2 Kings xviii., 4.

member the Sabbath day to keep it holy;' this is the first and great command." Such was, in substance, their epitome of the Mosaic legislation. "The Sabbath," says the Talmud, "is in importance equal to the whole law." "He who shall duly observe all the rites and customs of the Sabbath shall obtain the pardon of all his sins, even though he hath been guilty of idolatry."*

Great as was the honor which they paid the Sabbath, they wholly failed to comprehend its import. Their literalism tainted its observance as it tainted all else. This memorial of emancipation became a day of bondage. On this hour of freedom redeemed from a life of toil the soul was manacled by the most puerile and petty regulations. One might not walk upon the grass because it would be bruised, which would be a kind of threshing; nor catch a flea, which would be a kind of hunting; nor wear nailed shoes, which would be bearing a sort of burden; nor, if he fed his chickens, suffer any corn to lie upon the ground, lest a kernel should germinate, which would be a kind of sowing. And from Moses's command to the encamped Israelites, "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day,"* because, despite the divine command, they had gone forth from the camp to gather the manna, Dositheus drew the sage conclusion that a Jew must not move between sunrise and sunset, and established a sect whose observance of the Sabbath consisted in their retaining for the day whatever posture they happened to be in at the rising of the sun. Nor was his interpretation much more absurd than the more orthodox one that the Jews' place included a radius of 2000 cubits,† and that a Sabbath-day's journey of that length was therefore exempt from the prohibition of the law.

It is true that the Pharisees did not forget what in modern

* Stehlin's Rabbinical Literature, p. 288.

† The length of the cubit is variously estimated at from 17½ to 21 inches. If the Greek standard—18.20 inches—be adopted, the Sabbath-day's journey would be something over half a mile.

days we sometimes fail to remember, that the Sabbath is a feast, not a fast. Isaiah had commanded that it be called a delight. To this command they yielded a cordial obedience. The day was one of festal rejoicing. Social entertainments were part of its religious observance. Every week the pious Jew repeated that Thanksgiving-day which New England enjoys but once a year. Walking, social visiting, even games and dancing, were part of the Pharisaic observance of the Sabbath day. But they wholly failed to comprehend that spirit of liberty which is the inspiration of all true joy. Their festivities, no less than their rest, were ceremonials. They lay late in bed by law. They put themselves under bonds to fare sumptuously. They were joyful as a matter of conscientious obligation. They accounted him the strictest Sabbatarian who set the most affluent table. In short, they caged the soul, and then commanded it to sing. They knew not that the way to a joyous song is an open door and a free air.

"Meet the Sabbath with a lively hunger; let thy table be covered with fish, flesh, and generous wine." "Let the seats be soft, and adorned with beautiful cushions, and let elegance smile in the furniture of the table." "Assume all thy sprightliness." "Utter nothing but what is provocative of mirth and good humor." "Walk leisurely, for the law requires it, as it does also longer sleep in the morning." "Be resolute and merry, though ruined in debt."* Such are some of the Rabbinical precepts concerning the Sabbath. Whatever else may be said of them, they certainly do not sustain the popular conception of the Jewish Sabbath as a day of rigorous asceticism. On the contrary, if we may believe the not altogether impartial testimony of the early Christians, it was too often wasted in idleness, and degraded by sensuality and drunkenness.†

In brief, the Pharisaic Sabbath combined a strange inter-

* Stehlins's Rabbinical Literature, vol. i., p. 263.

† Augustine, quoted in Cox's Sabbath Literature.

mingling of rigorous restraints in respect to labor with great freedom in social festivities.

Jesus never said or did any thing which a reasonable construction can interpret as indicating a desire to pluck away from a weary world its divinest institution, a weekly Sabbath. He distinctly asserted that he did not come to abrogate the Mosaic laws, but to fulfill them;* and the Sabbath will never have its final fulfillment until the day when the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. He never, it is true, directly inculcated its observance upon his disciples. He never referred to it in the partial summary which he once or twice afforded of the Ten Commandments.† But this will not seem strange to any one who reflects that the Sabbatic law was the first and most characteristic feature of Judaism. Other nations had their temples, their feasts, their sacrifices, their priests, their prophets, their sacred writings. Even the rite of circumcision was not unknown among the Gentiles. The Jew alone knew and observed a Sabbath day.‡ It needed, therefore, no inculcation from one who had come to turn the minds of men from the exterior observance to the interior spirit, from the temple to the God who sanctified the temple, from the literal observance of the Sabbath to the repose of soul which is found alone by those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High. Divine alike in its origin and its beatific character, it was none the less an institution and an observance. And Christ came not to build institutions, which are in their very nature transient, but to set forth principles, which are everlasting.

But there is no indication that Jesus engaged himself in secular work on the Sabbath, or encouraged his disciples to do so. If they had plied their customary labor, casting their

* Matt. v., 17. † Mark x., 19; Luke xviii, 20; Matt. xxii., 37–40.

‡ The weekly division of time is to be found among all nations, but there is no adequate evidence that a hebdomadal day of rest was known out of Judea. See Smith's Bible Dictionary, arts. Week and the Lord's Day. See contra Dwight's Theology, vol. iii., serm. cvii., p. 255.

nets, for example, on that day, it would certainly have been recorded against them. But not even Jewish tradition contains any such charge.* On the other hand, Jesus habitually attended the synagogue services with his disciples on the Sabbath, and so, by his example, recognized its value, if he did not by his inculcations directly maintain its obligations.† His followers did not understand that he took from them this ancient Jewish privilege. A weekly Sabbath became after his death as characteristic a feature of the Christian Church as it had been of the Jewish commonwealth. And although the day has been changed, if not by the direct authority of the master, by the general consent of his disciples; although its sanctions are no longer those of a civil code, enforced by stringent penalties; although it finds its best support, not in the conscience, but in the spiritual aspirations of mankind; and although its spirit has been somewhat modified, and will be still more changed when the precepts and examples of Christ are fully comprehended, still the monumental day of rest remains, the chief, if not the sole heir-loom inherited by Christianity from the magnificent and stately system of ceremonies and observances which characterized its predecessor.

On the other hand, it will be regarded by some as a singular, and must be esteemed by all a significant circumstance, that Jesus never rebuked what modern Pharisaism would certainly esteem a desecration of this holy day. It was, as we have seen, a festival. He never attempted to check the festivities which characterized it. He walked out with his disciples.‡ In respect to this, as well as to all other observances of a ceremonial character, the tendency of his practice and of his teachings was to liberate the soul from every thing like Judaical bondage to the outward form. He attended

* See Goldstein's Jesus of Nazareth, passim, and Salvador's Trial and Condemnation of Jesus. In these Jewish works all the charges of Judaism are ably presented against Christ. There is no pretense of any personal disregard of the Sabbath by him or his disciples by any actual secular toil.

† Mark vi., 1–3; Luke iv., 15, 16, 31; xiii., 10. ‡ Matt. xii., 1.

without scruple social gatherings;* for where the heart was already opened by seasonable social intercourse, he found the best opportunity for his most sacred instructions. The theory which forbids to converse, to sing, to laugh, to walk upon that day because it is holy to the Lord, is of as late a date as the sixteenth century,† and finds as little warrant in the Mosaic institution as it does in the precepts and example of Christ himself.

But, while he neither relaxed on the one hand the obligation of secular rest, nor rebuked on the other the social festivities that shared the day with public worship, he repudiated with indignation the Pharisaic traditions which made this day of rest and gladness one of rigid observance and legal bondage. He protested against the spirit which, on this memorial day of emancipation, manacled the hands and the hearts of the children of God. He repelled with especial indignation the idea that its hours were too sacred for labors of mercy and of love. He took from it nothing but its chains. He found it a day of rest to the body, but of weariness to the spirit. He left it a day no less of refreshment to the mind and of recreation to the soul. He found this cutting from the tree of life a dead form, leafless, blossomless. He infused it with new life, clothed it with verdure, and filled its branches with the singing of birds. He found it a law; he left it a privilege. As a gardener in autumn guards his more delicate plants by enwrapping them with straw, so the Jews had endeavored to preserve this their ancient Sabbath by wrapping it around with dead traditions which they called "guards of the law." Jesus tore off these wrappings. The

* Luke xiv., 1, 7, 12.

† Even the Westminster Assembly overruled the proposition that "there be no feasting on the Sabbath," and substituted that the diet be so ordered as not unnecessarily to keep servants from public worship. See, for a full account of the debates and the final action, Coxe's Sabbath Literature, vol. i., p. 229, 230. It is hardly necessary to add that Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, indeed all the Continental reformers, regarded the Sabbath as characteristically a festival. See Coxe's Sabbath Literature, *passim*.

Pharisees cried out against the desecration. But the spring had come. And Christ preserved the Sabbath which to their eyes he seemed to be destroying by endowing it with a new life in itself—a life which these wrappings were repressing, and ere long would have extinguished.

But this was not all.

The Pharisaic Sabbath was the strong-hold of Pharisaism. It was to the Jews what the cross is to the Roman Catholic, the emblem of his religion. A day of ceremonies, it was the very heart of ceremonialism. It was, therefore, the first objective point of Christ's attack. A wise general, he struck for the key of the Pharisaic position. By open, flagrant, repeated, and purposed violations of the Pharisaic traditions, he inaugurated the conflict not merely between himself and the Pharisees, but between spiritual life and ceremonial law. For a second time he went up to Jerusalem. Before, it was to cleanse the Temple; now, it was to emancipate the Sabbath. His first assault was on the degenerate priesthood; his second was on the degenerate prophets.

Near one of the gates of Jerusalem was an intermittent spring. It possessed, as such springs often do, some medicinal virtues.* Its periodical effervescence had given rise to a beautiful legend that on certain occasions an angel descended and troubled the water; a legend which has since become incorporated in the sacred text as a partial explanation of the events there recorded.† That this is a legendary, not an inspired interpretation, will hardly seem doubtful to any one who considers how inadmissible is the supposition that "God would really thus miraculously interpose to throw down from time to time a single boon among a company of cripples, to be seized by the most forward, selfish, and eager, leaving

* For a reference to several such springs, see Ebrard's Gosp. Hist., p. 291.

† John v., 4. "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever, then, first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." This verse is omitted as a subsequent interpolation by Alford, Tholuck, Ebrard, Trench, and Olshausen. It is retained by Bloomfield, and doubted by Lange.

those most discouraged, helpless, and miserable to be overwhelmed again and again with bitter disappointment."*

About this pool a shelter for the sick had been erected, that had received the significant and pleasing title of House of Mercy, in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda. Passing this porch on the second morning after his arrival in the holy city, Christ's attention was attracted by the hopeless look of a helpless cripple. For thirty-eight years he had lain in bondage, probably to that most intolerable of despots, the paralysis—a long imprisonment, and a fearful punishment, as the account incidentally indicates, for some sinful excesses of his youth.† Day after day he had dragged himself laboriously to this station. At every periodic troubling of the water a new hope had been born in him. But on every such occasion some one less helpless than himself had stepped down before him, and snatched from the hand of the angel the gift he had hoped to receive. The House of Mercy was thus to him like Hades to a second Tantalus. The long-deferred hope had made his heart sick, and had stamped upon his features the expression of despair.

Jesus fixed his eye upon him; by the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" aroused his will, which was already beginning to suffer a paralysis akin to that of his body, and, deeply moved by the simple but touching story of his experience, gave him liberty by the command,

"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!"

Though the little mattress upon which this poor man was lying was no great load, to bear it on the Sabbath day was a direct violation of the letter of the ancient law.‡ Christ's command contravened, therefore, not merely the tradition of the Jews, but the form of the inspired statutes. If Christ's object in this flagrant violation of Jewish prejudice was to raise an issue, he succeeded. The paralytic was straightway called to account for bearing his bed on the Sabbath, and

* Abbott's New Testament, *in loco.* † John v., 14.
‡ Neh. xiii., 19; Jer. xvii., 21, 22, 27.

only escaped condemnation by pleading the command of the unknown Rabbi who had healed him. The accusation was therefore transferred to Jesus, who was examined, whether formally before the court, or informally before the multitude, does not very clearly appear. He was indicted, however, not for the command he had given, but for the cure he had wrought.

Jesus replied, in effect, that the Jews entirely misapprehended the idea of the Sabbath rest. God himself, so said the ancient record, rested on the seventh day, and therefore blessed and hallowed it. But God's rest was no inaction. Flowers bloomed; rain fell; the sun shone; all the beneficent operations of nature went on as usual. On that day, as on every other, Bethesda was a House of Mercy, and the angel intermitted not his accustomed visits. This divine example interpreted the Sabbath rest—a day for laying aside of customary toil, but not for the inactivity of love, which knows no rest. So we understand his somewhat enigmatical sentence, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

This parallel seemed to the Jews to imply an assumption of equality with God, and they dropped the lesser charge of Sabbath-breaking to prosecute the more heinous one of blasphemy. Jesus justified their deduction, but defended himself from the charge by asserting his divine character and mission;* and from these two charges he escaped with his life only by that overruling Providence of God which the evangelist has indicated in his subsequent declaration that Christ's hour had not yet come.

The question which Jesus had thus raised in Jerusalem followed him to Galilee.

Shortly after this occurrence, he was passing one day with his disciples through a wheat-field. By an express statute of Judaism, any one might pluck of standing wheat a handful as he passed,† as by the common law of New England any one may pick a single apple of the orchard from the

* John v., 19–47. † Deut. xxiii., 25.

ground without being deemed guilty of trespass or theft. The disciples plucked some ears of the wheat, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the kernels. The Pharisees at once protested against this new infraction of their Sabbath. There was not, so they would argue, so much harm in the act as in what it would lead to. If Jesus might pluck with the hand, the owner might gather with the sickle. If the one might break the kernel in the hand, the other might grind it in the mill. It is impossible to draw the line. Such is still the argument of Pharisaism.*

But Jesus always cared more for the liberty of the many than for the perverted consciences of the few. He defended the act by the enunciation of a principle so comprehensive that few fully appreciate, so radical that few fully accept it. He declared, in effect, that ceremonies are never of the essence of religion. Every Sabbath twelve loaves of bread were placed on the sacred table of the Temple. Like the consecrated wafer, they were holy to the Lord. No one but the priest might eat of them.† But David ate without condemnation. Nay, every Sabbath was profaned by the priests in the Temple without blame. The law forbade the kindling of a fire. The priests brought the shew-bread smoking hot from the oven on that day.‡ It forbade the bearing of burdens. They carried to and fro the loaves, the sacrifices, and the Temple utensils. It forbade labor. That was the busiest day of all the week to the tribe of Levi. A service that required the slaying of bullocks and of goats involved no little drudgery of toil. Yet the streams that flowed from Mount Moriah ran redder with blood on the Sabbath than at any other time. But the priests were blameless. If the Pharisees had understood the ancient prophets, they would have known that the requirements of mercy are always greater than those of sacrifice, and that for humanity's sake, much

* The plucking of wheat on the Sabbath is expressly prohibited by the Talmud.—Lightfoot, quoted in Alford on Matt. xii., 1.

† Exod. xxix., 32, 33.

‡ 1 Sam. xxi., 6.

more than for the Temple's sake, the literal law of the Sabbath may be set aside;* for the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.†

This declaration struck at the very heart of ceremonialism. One must be willing to die for a principle. No one ever insisted on this more strenuously than Jesus. "If any man hate not his own life also, he can not be my disciple," passed into a proverb with him.‡ But he need not even suffer a pang of hunger to preserve intact a ceremony; for there is no institution however memorable, no ceremony however sacred, that it is not subordinate to man's use, and subject to modification when it ceases to serve its purpose, or when a higher law or a more imperative need interferes.

It was apparently on the same day that Jesus healed the paralytic.§ He was in the synagogue. The Pharisees had accompanied him thither, not for worship, still less for instruction, but to watch for heresies in his discourse. The heresy-hunter is a lineal descendant of the ancient Pharisees. Christ seized the opportunity to give them what they wanted, a ground of accusation. A man was present with a withered hand. The disorder was not serious, probably not painful. The cure might have been left, without harm, till the following day. To cure him on the Sabbath directly violated a Rabbinical precept.‖ Jesus told the patient to stand forth. He then addressed to the Pharisees a very simple question—"Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it?" It was a terrible thrust, sharp, quick, keen. They were planning to kill Jesus. Jesus was preparing to heal a paralytic. Which was breaking the Sab-

* The verse in Matt. xii., 6, "In this place is (*one*) greater than the Temple," is susceptible of two interpretations. The structure of the sentence seems to justify the meaning ordinarily attached to it, that Christ referred to himself, and indicated his right to modify the Sabbath law. The context, however, indicates the other interpretation—Mercy is greater than the Temple, and if the Sabbath may be set aside for the Temple service, much more for the service of love.

† Mark ii., 27.

‡ Luke xiv., 26. Compare John xii., 25.

§ Mark iii., 1–6.

‖ See Townsend's New Test. Notes, part iii., n. 39.

bath? No wonder they held their peace. Then he turned upon them with indignation. Not one of you, said he, but would pull your sheep out of a pit to-day; and how much better is a man than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Thereupon he told the man to stretch forth his hand whole as the other, while the Pharisees went out to council how they might destroy him.*

They were sorely perplexed, however. Christ had not even violated the letter of the Sabbath. He had *done* nothing. He had simply said "Stretch forth thy hand," and it was difficult to condemn him for mere words. *He* had not plucked the wheat;† and his disciples they cared not for. It was the Rabbi himself they hated. He had openly reviled their religion. He had trampled under foot their Sabbath. He had exposed their insincerity to all the people. He had put them to open shame in the great congregation. Their chief seats in the synagogue had become as criminal benches. They had watched that they might accuse him, and he had turned the tables upon them and become their accuser. They were filled with rage. They verily believed, too, that this new Rabbi who was bringing them to open shame was also undermining the authority of religion, and the faith and institutions of their fathers. To them it seemed that the safety of the Church and of the state demanded the suppression of this horrible heretic. Thus religious rancor added to wounded pride and personal envy. They were conscientious in their persecutions of Jesus. But nothing is so vindictive as a perverted conscience. How far it carried them is evidenced by the fact that they invited their hereditary foes, the Herodians, to their councils.‡

The people, on the other hand, little as they appreciated the spirit of Jesus, openly applauded his dexterity.§ The

* The effect of this home-thrust is seen in the fact that, by a subsequent provision of Rabbinical law, it has been forbidden to lift the beast out of the pit, though the owner may lay planks to let him out! (Alford on Matt. xii., 14), or give him food and straw to lie on (Lange's Life of Christ, iii., 170).

† Mark ii., 23. ‡ Mark iii., 6. § See Luke xiii., 17.

populace are always apt to attach themselves unthinkingly in such a controversy to the one who is keenest in thrust and quickest in repartee. That he had silenced the Jewish Rabbis added new lustre to Christ's already increasing fame. Crowds flocked to see and hear him* from all parts of the Holy Land. To them he was no Messiah, but only the last new sensation. He preached strange doctrines and wrought strange cures—this was about all they knew. Such fame as this was exceedingly distasteful to Jesus. He retired more within himself.† He procured a boat by which he could easily escape from the throng.‡ He cautioned those whom he healed not to bruit their cures abroad.§ But it was impossible for him to escape the publicity of popularity. It is one of the misfortunes of public men to have many adherents and few friends; and between unappreciative homage and appreciative persecution there is but little to choose.

It was quite clear that this controversy between the religion of the heart and that of ceremony could not be settled in a single life. The time had come when in the bosom of the old Church Christ must organize a new one that should take its place.

* Mark iii., 7, 8.
† Matt. xii., 15.
‡ Mark iii., 9.
§ Matt. xii., 16; Mark iii., 12.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MUSTARD SEED.*

THE Church of Christ is a growth rather than an organization. This is not our philosophy. It is, in effect, Christ's statement. He compared his Church to a mustard seed, "which, indeed," said he, "is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."† It is of the planting of that mustard seed we have now to speak.

It was clear, as we have said, that the battle which Jesus had initiated could not be carried to its consummation during his earthly life. It must be left an inheritance to others. It was to be a campaign of centuries, which he, indeed, would conduct, but by his spiritual, not his earthly presence. Humanly speaking, all he could do during his brief stay upon the earth was to select a few appreciative disciples, imbue them with his spirit, instruct them in his principles, and leave them to carry on after his death, and under his inspiration, that work, the most powerful instrument of which would be afforded by his cross. He could only give to the world its needed truth in seed forms; others must sow it in tears, pluck out the worldly weeds that choke its growth, water it with their blood, and patiently watch its development through the long centuries. He who had seen from the beginning this necessity, from the beginning had gathered about him a few fitted to be the custodians of this later and more blessed rev-

* Matt. v., 1; x., 1–4; Mark iii., 13–19; Luke vi., 12–16.
† Matt. xiii., 31, 32.

elation than that which the hand of God himself inscribed on the tables of stone. He now began to give to this nucleus of his future Church a form, slight, indeed, but somewhat more precise and defined than it at first assumed.

Among the crowds who thronged him wherever he went were some who had already instinctively attached themselves to his person—among them some women, who, a little later, followed him wherever he went, received the ministrations of his word, and themselves ministered to his bodily wants.* From these more appreciative hearers Jesus selected twelve to be in a peculiar sense his disciples. It is impossible not to perceive in this number a recognition of the ancient theocracy with its twelve tribes. Christ, who spake often by acts, and with significance greater even than that of his words, thus indicated to the Jewish nation his purpose to establish a new theocracy, or to reinstate, in a new and spiritual form, the old one. This purpose was not left to be merely a matter of surmise. He distinctly asserted, in a phrase which it must be confessed is somewhat enigmatical to us, that these disciples should hereafter sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.†

These disciples were not merely such as chanced to attach themselves to Jesus. They were carefully selected by him from the greater number of his adherents.‡ Christ himself was careful to declare this just before his death. "Ye have not chosen me," said he, "but I have chosen you;"§ a sentence from which the conclusion has been sometimes deduced that the Christian is peculiarly the chosen of God, but which, in its connections, seems to warrant no other conclusion than that Christ selects and adapts his instruments to their various work.

But when we endeavor to ascertain the principles upon which, in the case of the twelve, that selection was made, it must be confessed the subject presents some perplexities.

* Luke viii., 2, 3; Mark xii., 41.
† Matt. xix., 28; Luke xxii., 30.
‡ Luke vi., 13.
§ John xv., 16.

With perhaps two exceptions, there was nothing remarkable about these men except their attachment to Jesus. They produced no profound impression upon their own age. They occupied no very important position in the Church after Christ's death. James, the brother of Christ, who was not even a believer in Jesus till a much later period, seems to have occupied a more prominent position in the early Church than even Peter or John.* Paul, who was now growing up with his parents in the distant city of Tarsus, or learning in the school of Gamaliel that Pharisaic philosophy in the de-

* Acts xv., 13, with Gal. i., 19, indicate that it was James, the Lord's brother, who occupied a prominent position as a leader in the Church at Jerusalem after Christ's death. There are three persons of the name of James mentioned in the New Testament history: James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, James the son of Alpheus, called also James the Less (Matt. x., 2–4; Mark iii., 17–19; Luke vi., 14–16; Acts i., 13), and James the brother of Jesus (Matt. xiii., 55; Mark vi., 3). Whether the two last may not be identical is a question involved in great uncertainty, and pronounced by Dr. Neander the most difficult in apostolic history. On the one hand, it is said that the mother of James the Less is Mary, and, apparently, the wife of Cleophas (Mark xv., 40); that there is reason to regard Cleophas and Alpheus different forms of the same name; that this Mary was a sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John xix., 25); that the designation of James and Joses, etc., as brethren of Jesus, is a Græcism for near relatives, the relation being that of own cousins; and that Paul distinctly designates James, the brother of the Lord, as an apostle (Gal. i., 19). On the other hand; it is said that the assertion that Jesus had brethren is repeatedly made (Matt. xiii., 55; Mark vi., 3) in such connections as to refute the idea that cousins only are referred to (Matt. xii., 46; Mark iii., 31; Luke viii., 19; John ii., 12); that the mother's sister mentioned in John xix., 25 is not Mary the wife of Cleophas, but the Salome mentioned in Matt. xxvii., 56; Mark xv., 40, the combined passages reading thus: "There stood by the cross of Jesus (first) his mother—" (John); (second), "his mother's sister" (John), that is to say, "Salome" (Mark), who was also "the mother of Zebedee's children" (Matt.); (third), "Mary, the mother of James and Joses" (Matt.), "the wife of Cleophas" (John), (the same name as Alpheus, see Matt. x., 3); and (fourth), "Mary Magdalene" (Matt., Mark, and John); that to suppose, as the other hypothesis does, two sisters of the same name, Mary, is irrational; and, finally, that it is distinctly asserted, after the formation of the apostolic band, that Jesus's brethren did not believe in him (John vii., 5). The latter opinion seems to me to be the better supported by Scripture, and is the one I have adopted, though the subject is one of great difficulty, and the question will probably never be altogether settled.

struction of which he was to take so prominent a part,* was more influential in extending the Church after Christ's death than any, we might almost say than all the original disciples.

Those whom Christ selected for the germ of his future Church were wholly from the peasant population of Palestine. With a single exception they were Galileans. That exception was Judas Iscariot.† They were simple-minded men, of no considerable mental culture, of no rare qualities of genius, of no great mental grasp, of no remarkable heroic qualities even. If Christ chose them that he might show the world what he could make out of very common stuff, and to demonstrate that his kingdom stood not in human greatness, but in the power of God, they were admirably selected, we should say, for such a purpose. Yet let us remember that they are presented in perpetual contrast with their Master; and no human greatness but would be belittled by the comparison.

The names of these twelve, whose names Jesus alone has rendered immortal, were Simon, also called Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathaniel, the son of Tholmai, and often designated by his father's name as Bartholomew,‡ Thomas, a certain tax-gatherer called both Levi and Matthew, a second James, Lebbæus, a second Simon, and Judas, better known as Judas Iscariot.§

Of the history and character of these disciples we know but very little. Anxious only to give the world a portraiture of their Master, they have preserved little or none of themselves. They were not all of them first brought together by Christ. James and John, who were brothers, appear to have been own cousins of Jesus.‖ Peter and Andrew were part-

* Acts xxii., 3. † See post, chap. xxix., Treachery.

‡ See chap. viii., p. 103, note.

§ Matt. x., 2–4; Mark iii., 17–19; Luke vi., 13–16; Acts i., 13.

‖ Salome, their mother (Mark xv., 40; Matt. xxvii., 56), appears from John xix., 25 to have been Mary's sister. See p. 215, note.

ners in business with them.* Philip seems to have been acquainted with these four fishermen before he knew Jesus, and evidently was an old friend of Nathaniel or Bartholomew.†

It is commonly said that the apostles were illiterate men. It is certain that they had little or no knowledge of the Rabbinical literature of the age. They were untrained in the theological schools of their time; they were all laymen;‡ there was neither a priest nor a scribe among them. Their minds were equally free from the conventionalism of that lifeless religion which characterized Pharisaism, and from the false culture of that effete civilization which belonged to Greece. Their illiterateness was their best preparation to receive without prejudice the principles of that new and spiritual religion which Jesus had come to found. Even to the present day, the learning of the schools is apt to generate a theological atmosphere which dims the pure light of the Gospel, and the simple student of the Word often best grasps its spirit, though he be not best versed in its letter.

Illiterate though they were, these first disciples were not altogether ignorant men, nor chosen, as is sometimes imagined, from among the lowest classes. They were men of what we should call a religious nature. Four of them Jesus found at the ford of Bethabara, listening with attentive ears to the words of John the Baptist.§ A fifth had evidently looked with them for the coming of the hope of Israel.‖ They were not without some culture. They probably had, all of them, enjoyed the benefits of that popular education which even in those degenerate days characterized Judaism. Philip¶ and Peter** were both acquainted with the Greek language. The former was perhaps a Hellenist by birth; at least his name would indicate this. The same may be said of Andrew. Matthew was a ready and methodical writer. The effect of

* Luke v., 7, 10.
† John i., 43–45.
‡ Acts iv., 13. See Alford's note.
§ John i., 36, 37, 42, 44.
‖ John i., 45, 49.
¶ John xii., 20; Acts viii., 26, 30.
** Acts x., 4; and note the Epistle general of Peter.

his training as a keeper of the public moneys is to be easily seen in his gospel, the most systematic and orderly in its arrangement of the four. Peter was a man of considerable means, lived in his own house,* where he hospitably entertained Jesus, and evidently considered that he had made no little sacrifice in leaving his business to follow Christ.† James and John lived with their father, who was able to keep hired servants, and to carry on his fishing operations on a somewhat extensive scale.‡ The latter had such relations with the high-priest as gave him easy access to the palace.§ On the whole, it may be inferred that Jesus chose his apostles from that middle class which Abraham Lincoln has called "the plain people," to which by his earthly birth Jesus himself belonged, and from which God's providence has generally chosen the world's great men.

Mental genius often more than compensates for lack of culture; and there is a certain moral genius, a spiritual apprehension of divine truth, and invincible faith in its final victory over material things, which is more than either. It was this moral genius which characterized alike Moses, the framer of the old theocracy,‖ and Paul, who was, under Christ, the builder of the new. But neither mental nor moral genius strongly characterized these twelve chosen companions. Peter and John are the only remarkable men among them, and they are chiefly what they were made by the influence of Jesus. Their early life, so far as it is indicated to us by the evangelists, would have given to any apprehension but that of Christ little promise of their later power. John, sharing at first with the other disciples in their expectation of an immediate and temporal triumph, ambitiously asks from his cousin preferment in the coming kingdom.¶ Scarcely less impetuous by nature than his friend and comrade Peter; quick to rebuke an imagined rival of his Lord;** ill brooking any

* Luke iv., 38. † Matt. xix., 27. ‡ Mark i., 20.
§ John xviii., 16. ‖ Heb. xi., 24–28.
¶ Matt. xx., 20–24. ** Mark ix., 38.

insult to his master, and anxious to repay it by a quick revenge,* he and his brother James possess by nature a character which earns for them from Christ the title of Sons of Thunder.† Youngest of the twelve,‡ he most readily imbibes the spirit of Jesus, and is the beloved disciple, not so much by reason of the original congeniality of his character as by the faith which never doubts, and the strong heart that never relaxes its earnest, reverent love, and that moulds, therefore, the whole nature into conformity to his Lord. Simon, bold, dashing, impetuous, the Marshal Ney of the little band, is by his very faults endeared to us; but, the least stable of the disciples, he strangely belies his title Peter, *i. e.*, a rock. He starts to walk to Jesus on the wave, but loses courage almost as soon as he touches the water;§ impetuously refuses to let Christ wash his feet, as impetuously offers his head and his hands;‖ draws his sword to fight single-handed the Roman soldiery, turns and flees when Christ commands him to put it up;¶ follows Christ into the palace, but there denies with violent vituperation that he is a disciple;** is one of the first to baptize the Gentiles,†† then retracts from his position for fear of Jewish opposition in the Church.‡‡ Such is not the material of which heroes are ordinarily made.

These two disciples stand out, perhaps, in greater prominence by reason of the strong contrast between them. John is a man of contemplation, Peter a man of action; John is the metaphysician, Peter the pioneer; John is ever quickest to perceive a truth, Peter is ever quickest to act upon it; John outruns Peter to the sepulchre, but is held back by reverent awe from entering in; Peter, fearless of angels, and oppressed by no such sense of holy ground, goes in unhesitatingly;§§ John first discerns it is the Lord when, after his resurrection, he appears to the disciples on the Sea of Galilee;

* Luke ix., 54. † Mark iii., 17.
‡ See Smith's Bible Dict., art. John the Apostle, and passages there cited.
§ Matt. xiv., 28–30. ‖ John xiii., 6, 8, 9.
¶ John xviii, 10; Matt. xxvi., 56. ** John xviii., 15, 17, 25–27.
†† Acts x., 47, 48. ‡‡ Gal. ii., 11–13. §§ John xx., 3–9.

Peter plunges into the sea to go to greet him;* John, too full of quiet thoughts for ready speech, was never a popular speaker; Peter, too impatient and impetuous for the pen, was the revivalist of the first century, at whose preaching thousands were convicted and turned to Christ;† John, less popular in his own age, has been better appreciated as the world has grown better able to understand the spiritual subtleties of his character; Peter, foremost in the early Church, foremost to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles,‡ first to defend that pioneer work in the council of the Church,§ has gradually lost the prominence which an active temperament always awards the living and denies the dead.

This very contrast in their characters cements a firm friendship between them, which constitutes one of the most charming episodes in the minor incidents of the Gospel history. We love to see this man of passionate activity and this man of tender contemplations walking through life always arm-in-arm. Together they go down to attend the preaching of the Baptist at Bethabara.‖ Together they are cleaning their nets by the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus summons them to forsake all and follow him.¶ Together they alone of the twelve are found in Caiaphas's hall, listening with anxious ears to the trial of their Lord.** Together he finds them after his resurrection at the Sea of Galilee.†† Together they go up to the Temple to join in mutual devotions.‡‡ Side by side they stand confronting the Sanhedrim in the earlier persecutions of the Church.§§ It is Peter who, at the Last Supper, asks John to find out from the Lord who is the one who shall betray him.‖‖ It is after Peter that John, more privileged than the rest, goes to gain for him, also, admission to the palace of the high-priest, after the apprehension of Jesus in the garden.¶¶ And it is after the future fate of John that Peter asks

* John xxi., 7. † Acts ii., 14–42. ‡ Acts x. § Acts xv., 7.
‖ John i., 35, 41. ¶ Luke v., 1–11. ** John xviii., 15, 16.
†† John xxi., 1–9. ‡‡ Acts iii., 1. §§ Acts iv., 13.
‖‖ John xiii., 24. ¶¶ John xviii., 15, 16.

when his own martyrdom is foretold. The friendship which bound together the preacher and the scholar of the Reformation finds its prototype in the love which unites the Luther and the Melancthon of the first century.

Such were the natural leaders in this chosen band. For the rest, the disciples were plain, common, matter-of-fact men. Christ's enigmatical sayings were a perfect puzzle to them.* He loved to mould truth in paradoxes, apothegms, and poetic forms. Their prosaic natures perpetually stumbled over his utterances. He cautions them against the leaven of the Pharisees. They straightway begin to discuss the matter among themselves, coming to the sage conclusion that he is afraid lest the Pharisees shall sell them poisoned bread.† He admonishes them to get ready their swords for the spiritual conflict that is at hand. They innocently produce two swords as evidence that they are prepared.‡ He asks Philip what they shall do to provide for the five thousand on the shore of Galilee. Poor Philip, sorely perplexed, can think of no other provision than their own scanty stock of five loaves and two small fishes.§ After three years of closest communion with his master, he surprises even Jesus by the request at the close of Christ's life-manifestation of God, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."‖ Thaddeus frankly confesses himself quite unable to understand the meaning of that future spiritual disclosure of the unseen Christ which is the inspiration of every true follower of him. "How," he says, "wilt thou manifest thyself to us and not unto the world?"¶ Thomas, puzzled by Christ's prophecy of his death, and uninspired even by hope of those mansions which Christ promises to prepare for them, avouches the spiritual inappreciation of the twelve by his declaration, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?"** Ut-

* See, besides references below, Matt. xv., 16; Mark vi., 52; John xvi., 16–18; Mark ix., 31, 32.
† Matt. xvi., 6, 7.
‡ Luke xxii., 35–38.
§ John vi., 5–9.
‖ John xiv., 8.
¶ John xiv., 22.
** John xiv., 5.

terly disheartened by the death of the supposed Messiah, he plants himself on modern rationalistic ground, and stoutly asserts that he will not believe in the resurrection of Jesus except upon the evidence of his own senses. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."* Evidently we are mistaken in clothing these twelve peasants in the glowing garments of romance, and attributing to them either remarkable power of mind or remarkable measure of faith, if by that we mean the spiritual apprehension of unseen realities. There is not one of them who might not well have repeated the confession of Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am."†

They were not even selected from the most moral portion of the community. Prominent among them was a despised tax-gatherer.‡ Less prominent another, whose previous identification with some of the turbulent factions which kept Palestine in a perpetual ferment earned for him the title of the Zealot.§ Even Simon Peter possessed by nature the Oriental vices of profanity and falsehood, characteristic of a wild and turbulent nature, intensified by the wild and turbulent life of a sailor; vices which, despite his long companionship with Jesus, returned, as such evil habits sometimes will, from the dead past, to overwhelm him with shame and confusion in the crisis hour of his life.‖ Among the women who constantly attended his ministry was one who certainly possessed, before he spoke peace to her soul, the wild and ungovernable nature of a demoniac,¶ and who was, in addition, if the surmises of some of the scholars be correct, a dissolute and abandoned woman.** In short, Jesus admitted sinners as well as publicans as associates. In the terse and powerful language which he so frequently employed, he asserted that the publicans and the harlots entered his Church before

* John xx., 25. † 1 Cor. xv., 10. ‡ Matt. x., 3.
§ Luke vi., 15. ‖ Mark xiv., 66–71. ¶ Luke viii., 2.
** Luke vii., 37–39.

the more correct but self-righteous Pharisees.* He was accustomed to say that he came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance;† a principle of selection which Pharisaism understands as little now as it did then. Nor did this repentance always prove genuine or permanent. In lurid light stands one of these twelve, Judas Iscariot, whose gross and earthly disposition, slumbering but not slain, reconquered the better nature which Jesus had awakened, and gave at last his master to a death of immortal honor, and himself to one of undying infamy and shame.

Such are the companions whom Jesus selects to accompany him in his itinerant ministry, to witness his cures, to hear his instructions, to receive the interpretation of his parables and apothegms, to be witnesses of his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection, and so to be prepared to co-operate in carrying on the work which he was by his death to inaugurate.‡ The form of their organization was as slight as the principles of their selection were peculiar. In fact, there was nothing which could be designated as an organization. Jesus provided no Constitution. He appointed no officers. He left the Church to form itself in the future as circumstances might dictate. He absolutely forbade titles of rank.§ He rebuked the disciples' aspiration after power in the new community.‖ He told them there was no pre-eminence but that of love, and that he who served the best was the greatest in the Church.¶ He forbade them from prohibiting others to preach or work cures in his name because they had not joined his Church.** It is true that, at a later period, he announced, in an enigmatical manner, the authority of his twelve friends to lock and unlock the gates of heaven, and to pronounce the remission of sins.†† But there is nothing to indicate that he conferred this power, whatever it may be deemed to be,

* Matt. xxi., 31, 32.
† Matt. ix., 13; Mark ii., 17; Luke v., 32.
‡ Mark iii., 14, 15.
§ Matt. xxiii., 8–12.
‖ Matt. xx., 20–23; Mark x., 35–45.
¶ Matt. xviii., 3, 4; Mark ix., 35, 37; John xiii., 12–17.
** Mark ix., 38, 39.
†† Matt. xvi., 19, 20; xviii., 18; John xx., 23.

upon any individual or class in the Church.* The relations of his disciples to civil society remained unchanged. The Christian Church was no separate community as were the Essenes. Peter was married, and lived, as far as their wandering life would allow, in his own home.† They paid the Temple tax uncomplainingly.‡ And their master, though "King of the Jews," commanded unresisting payment of tribute to the Cæsars.§

As little were they separated from the world by any outward signs. The Pharisees were separatists, and professed their religion by their dress, demeanor, and postures. Their religious language was one of elaborate ceremonialism. Even John the Baptist, reformer as he was, could not escape the universal and all-pervading atmosphere of the times. Whoever entered his community must enter through the door of baptism. His disciples were taught to be rigorous in fasting,‖ and were instructed in forms of prayer.¶ In Jesus's little community there was not, in the beginning, one single ceremony. No rite was necessary to enter this first Christian Church; no public ceremony set apart the applicant. The Lord's Supper was not established till the close of Christ's life, and there seems to be no sufficient ground for the assumption that it was then ordained exclusively as a *Church* ordinance.** Baptism was not adopted by Christ till after his resurrection, and it was then ratified and made sacred by a new significance rather than commanded as a necessary service.†† There is no evidence that any one of the twelve ever received what we should call Christian baptism, *i. e.*,

* It does not come within the province of this treatise to discuss the question of the primacy of Peter. Most Protestant readers at least will agree that whatever eminence he possessed belonged to his character, and not to any office that he filled. † Luke iv., 38, 39. ‡ Matt. xvii., 24, 27.

§ Matt. xxii., 16–21. ‖ Matt. ix., 14.

¶ Luke xi., 1. ** See Chap. XXX.—The Lord's Supper.

†† Matt. xxviii., 19. Mark xvi., 16, 17, makes belief, but not baptism, essential, though it is by far the strongest passage in support of the necessity of that ordinance. It is not found in some of the oldest MSS., and its gen-

the baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Christ never administered the rite.* And though there are reasons to think that the four disciples, Peter, Andrew, Philip, and John, who joined Jesus first at the Jordan, may have been baptized by the Baptist, since they were previously his disciples,† yet it is clear that such a baptism was not recognized as a Christian rite by the apostles.‡ This entire absence of all ceremonies not only gave offense to the Pharisees, but was a cause of serious perplexity to the honest disciples of John. They questioned whether one could really be the Messiah whose views on baptism and ablutions were so lax, and who positively disowned all observance of religious fasts.§ Even his own disciples came finally to him for a ritual like that which they had already been taught by the Baptist, but received instead that brief compendium of devotion, which has been no form, but a model of prayer and reverent praise to the everlasting Father throughout all Christendom ever since.‖

As he gave them no ecclesiastical Constitution, appointed them no officers, and established no ceremonies until at least a later day, so neither did he propound to them any creed. This little band of Galilean peasants possessed at first no declaration whatever of doctrine. Even so short and simple a confession of faith as "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" was of later origin as a formula of admission to the kingdom of God. In fact, it would be exceedingly difficult to say what these disciples did believe at this early period of their history. They had clearly no conception of the necessity of Christ's sacrifice, no expectation even of his death.¶ They but

uineness is matter of grave dispute among Bible critics. See Lange's note. in loco.

* John iv., 2. Εβαπτιζεν, the imperfect, indicates the habitual practice.

† John i., 36, and post.

‡ Acts xix., 1–5. See Robert Hall on "Terms of Communion," and on "The essential Difference between Christian Baptism and the Baptism of John," vol. i., p. 363, Gregory's edit. of Hall's Works, Harper and Brothers, 1839. § John iii., 25, 26. ‖ Luke xi., 1. ¶ Matt. xvi., 22.

vaguely, if at all, apprehended his divine nature.* This they learned only by long companionship with him. It was not until a much later period that even the boldest among them asserted Christ's divine sonship.† From the beginning, indeed, they perceived in him the Messiah,‡ but it was a Messiah who was to reinstate the throne of David, occupy it himself, and share its honors with his followers.§ They left all to follow Jesus, but it was with at least some indefinite expectations of an early and substantial recompense; and Peter doubtless expressed the unuttered hopes of the rest when he asked what they should receive therefor.‖

Personal love for a personal Savior—this was the power of their organization. They had very vaguely-formed faiths *about* Christ, but implicit faith *in* him. They left all to follow Jesus, with no clear idea whither he was leading them. They placed themselves under his absolute mastership, with no clear conception what he would make of them. Little as they could comprehend the meaning of his crucifixion, his disclosure of its approach only attached them more strongly to him.¶ Others might fall away when the hope of temporal sovereignty was dispelled, but, sorely as they were perplexed by his enigmas, the answer of their hearts to his plaintive question, "Will ye also go away?" was the naïve rejoinder, "To whom shall we go?"** He was literally in himself all and in all to them.

The possession of this all-absorbing personal love for Jesus was the one characteristic of the chosen members of his little community. Nothing they could do seemed to their hearts too much. To break the box of alabaster ointment was the natural expression of a heart that could find no language too costly in which to utter itself.†† To sink at his feet, washing them with tears and wiping them with the hair of her head, was the unartificial service of one to whom no service of love

* John xiv., 8. † Matt. xvi., 16. ‡ John i., 41, 45.
§ Luke xix., 11; Matt. xx., 20–28. ‖ Matt. xix., 27.
¶ Mark xiv., 31. ** John vi., 66–69. †† John xii., 3–8.

to him seemed unfitting.* To demand fire from heaven on the village that, violating the sacred rites of hospitality, refused him entrance, was the first thought of one who could patiently brook insult to himself, but could bear no affront to his master.† An absolute, unqualified allegiance was the simple but severe test which excluded many would-be disciples from the kingdom of God. None could join the army who did not surrender himself completely to his king. At times Christ seems purposely to have repelled those that sought him that he might test the ardor of their seeking, and that he might be embarrassed by no lukewarm disciples. Camp-followers never increase the strength of an army. On one occasion, followed by crowds, he turned about and told them in hyperbolic language that no man could be his disciple who did not hate his father and mother, and his own life also.‡ On another occasion a scribe proposed to join the little community which accompanied him. Christ replied that, if he did, he must share the privations of the master who, worse provided than the birds and the foxes, had not where to lay his head.§ To one who preferred the seemingly reasonable request that he might go home and bury his father, he replied that his disciples must leave the dead to bury their dead.‖ A young man who wished to join the society he commanded, as a condition, first to sell all his property, and give to the needy, that he might be as poor as his Lord.¶ These incidents indicate the kind of tests to which the twelve were subjected, as preliminary to that final test which the scenes of the crucifixion afforded to their dimmed faith, their shattered hope, their perplexed love.

Thus Jesus, with the fan of self-sacrifice in his hand, sifted out from the mass of curious and inappreciative followers** a few, remarkable for little else than the ardor of their devo-

* Luke vii., 36–39. † Luke ix., 54. ‡ Luke xiv., 25–27.
§ Matt. viii., 19, 20. ‖ Matt. viii., 21, 22.
¶ Matt. xix., 16–22. Some of these incidents will be referred to again in the order of their occurrence. ** Luke iii., 17.

tion to his person, and the readiness of their confiding and unprejudiced minds to receive his teaching. Gradually they had more and more attached themselves to him. The time had now come for him to separate them by a solemn ordination from the world, set them apart to the work of their ministry, and instruct them more comprehensively than he had hitherto done in the principles of that kingdom of which they were to be, in some sense, the founders, together with him.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.*

ESCAPING from the bustle of the town, the crowd of followers, and the angry glare of the inaugurated conflict, Jesus, as the dusk of twilight gathered over the shores of the Sea of Galilee, turned his back upon it, to find in the hill-country a brief respite, an hour of quiet contemplation of the darkening future and of preparation for it, and, above all, a night of communion with his Father—a solitary hour, when least of all he was alone, because God was with him. All night the stars looked down upon a scene of prayer ineffably more solemn than that wherein Jacob wrestled with the angel from whom with difficulty a blessing could be wrested,† or that when Moses in the veiled mount talked face to face with the God‡ whose incommunicable name the Jew dared not even so much as take upon his lips. Thus in prayer were the foundations of that church laid whose circumference was to inclose the whole earth, whose top was to reach the heavens. At the break of day, selecting from those of his disciples who had followed him hither with impatient footsteps the twelve apostles, he set them apart by solemn ordination to be the chosen companions of his life and the inspired witnesses of his teachings, his death, and his resurrection. Then, descending with them, not to the lake-country, but to the elevated plateau some one of whose higher crests had served him as a place of prayer, and gathering them about him in an inner circle, separated from the already

* Matt. v.–vii.; Luke vi., 20–49.

† Gen. xxxii., 25–32.

‡ Exod. xxxiv., 28.

waiting multitude by that invisible line which still separates from the world those that are "in the world, but not of the world," he announced, with an authority that needed no thunderings or lightnings to add to their divine sanction, the fundamental principles of the kingdom of God.*

As the traveler, following nearly the footsteps of Jesus, ascends from the shores of the Sea of Galilee into the hill-country which bounds it on the west, he observes a singular square-shaped hill, with two cones rising yet above it like the towers above the top of a flat-roofed church. This hill a

* There are two reports of the Sermon on the Mount—one by Matthew, v., 1–viii., 1; the other by Luke, vi., 20–49. They are quite different. That given by Luke is much briefer, and is said to have been delivered on a plain, vi., 17. Matthew indicates that the sermon was given on a mountain, v., 1. These differences have led to the hypothesis that there were two sermons, one delivered to the disciples alone, recorded by Matthew, the other given on the plain below, involving in part the same matter, and addressed to the multitude. So Dr. Eddy (Life of Christ, p. 312, 313), following Lange (Life of Christ, vol. ii., p. 380–383). Similarly Augustine, Calvin, and Tholuck; see Tholuck on Sermon on the Mount, Bible Cab., vi., p. 2, 3. It is more generally considered by modern scholars that there was but one discourse, addressed peculiarly to the disciples, but in the presence of and with some reference to the multitude, of which we have in the different reports only such variations as would naturally occur in the subsequent record by different writers. So Pressensé (Life of Christ, p. 361), Ebrard (Gospel History, p. 270–272), Neander (Life of Christ, p. 224), Bengel (Gnomon on Matt. v., 1; Luke vi., 17), Olshausen (Commentary, Matt. v., 1), Robinson (Harmony, § 41), Townsend (New Test., p. 75, pt. iii., note 42). The discrepancy as to place between Matthew and Luke is not serious, inasmuch as Matthew's assertion that he went up into a mountain only signifies that he left the lake to go up into the hill-country, and Luke's statement that he came down and stood in the plain indicates nothing more than that he descended from one of the higher peaks to the level plateau. So Ebrard, Wordsworth, Bloomfield, Bengel, and Olshausen *in loco*. The Mount of Beatitudes singularly answers all the conditions of the narrative (see next note), which may be harmonized thus: "And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve whom also he named apostles (Matt. v., 1; Luke vi., 12, 13); and he came down with them and stood in the plain, with the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea, etc., which came to hear him (Luke vi., 17); and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying" (Matt. v., 2).

tradition not very ancient nor extrinsically reliable, but receiving some confirmation from the nature of the ground, assigns as the place where Jesus delivered his ever-memorable Sermon on the Mount.* Its summit is an elevated platform capable of holding a vast congregation, and seeming to have been built by God for the very purpose of accommodating the congregation which gathered there to hear Jesus's inaugural address; while the "Horns of Hattin," by which name the cones that rise still above this platform are known, may well have afforded to Jesus that retreat into which he ascended from the multitude, to which he summoned his followers, and from which, with them, he returned again to proclaim to the people the fundamental principles of the kingdom he had come to inaugurate. The ever-memorable mount where Jehovah met with the stern old lawgiver rises grand but sterile out of a wilderness of singularly wild and desolate grandeur, a fitting spot for the enunciation of a law whose solemn sanction was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." From that mount of fire and smoke the people drew back in awe and terror. The mount, which Jesus's sermon has made forever a sweetly sacred spot, rising from the midst of a richly fertile country, its graceful form draped in summer green, with luxuriant vineyards covering the neighboring hill-tops, with the blue waters of the lake sparkling in the dancing sunlight, with the singing of birds and the fragrance of flowers filling the soft summer air, was a fitting spot for that inaugural address whose promise of peculiar blessings, nine times repeated, has given to the sacred hill its name, the Mount of Beatitudes. Drawn by that strong attraction

* The tradition which assigns Mount Hattin as the place where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered is not of itself entitled to much weight. Robinson's Researches, iii., p. 240–249; Thomson, The Land and the Book, ii., p. 1–8; Alford *in loco;* Andrews, Life of Christ, p. 248. But it is not unreasonable, and is entirely in accord with the narrative. Ellicott's Life of Christ, p. 169, note; Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, p. 360, 361, chap. x., 2, § 1. See Stanley for an admirable description of the hill and its adaptation to the purposes of this discourse.

which Christ exercised throughout his life, and has exercised with increasing power ever since, the people thronged its grassy slope, and a sea of upturned faces, listening, drank in these ever-memorable words of hope, of joy, and of instruction.

The philosophizing spirit of which Plato was the father, Aristotle the organizer, and Bacon the perfecter, had not yet found its way into the Holy Land. The Oriental still speaks far more to the imagination and to the heart than to the intellect. He studies far less than do we to systematize truth. He loves to state it in parables, apothegms, paradoxes, sharp, incisive sentences, that catch in the memory and remain there. Truth is to him a poem, and poetry is the highest truth. Christ spoke to the Oriental mind in Oriental language—rather let us say to the common mind in language which every where finds easiest entrance to the common heart. We are not to look, therefore, in the Sermon on the Mount for that statement of religious truth which would characterize a modern discourse given under like circumstances. It is rather a collection of pertinent apothegms and pithy sayings.

On the other hand, these are not thrown out as sparks from a blacksmith's forge, brilliant, but evanescent. There is a real connection between them, a real unity in the seemingly disjointed discourse. Its customary division into verses, paragraphs, and chapters give it an appearance yet more aphoristic than the reality. It possesses an order, but not that of a modern sermon. "The only logic," says Tholuck, "that Jesus observes is the logic of the heart." In a general way, it may be described as giving the characteristics of that Messianic kingdom which all Israel was anticipating, by contrasting it, first, with the popular expectations;* second, with the Mosaic system;† and, third, with the Pharisaic formalism.‡ It closes with an account of the way by which this kingdom may be won.§ It is the theme of

* Matt. v., 1–16.
† Matt. v., 17–48.
‡ Matt. vi.; vii., 1–6.
§ Matt. vii., 7–27.

which Jesus's whole subsequent life is the development; the foundation on which the whole superstructure of Christianity is built; the warp of the robe with which Christ has draped the before unclad earth. The true inaugural of Christ's Church, it contains "the quintessence of all that is peculiar to the kingdom of our Lord."*

The Jews were expecting a restored kingdom. The better portion, the Simeons who were waiting for the hope of the consolation of Israel, framed their anticipations of the future from the memories of the past, and looked for a successor of Moses to re-establish the theocracy. The people, reading the ancient prophecies founded on Mount Sinai with a literalism which ought not to surprise us, since it finds constant counterpart in the scholarship of modern times, expected a kingdom of Judaism like those of Greece and of Rome, whose glory should resemble, yet eclipse that of the palaces of Herod and the pageants of heathenism. Even Christ's own disciples shared this expectation,† and needed to be constantly reminded that the kingdom of God was not in meat and in drink, nor, let us add, in riches and in power, but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."‡

Christ, at the outset of his discourse, sets forth the true nature of that spiritual kingdom whose dominion shall know no end. He portrays the truth that being is more than hav-

* Olshausen on Matt. v., i. For various explanations of the true analysis of the Sermon on the Mount, see Tholuck on Sermon on the Mount, Introd., p. 31 and post. Compare therewith Lange's Life of Christ, vol. ii.; Lange's Commentary, Matt. v., 1–16, Introd.; Alford *in loco*, and Bull's Jesus and the Twelve, which latter seems to me, however, wholly to miss the spirit and meaning of the discourse. With the exception of Bull, who regards it as directed against the spirit of selfishness, and Grosse, who depicts it as a sermon on true perfection, of which chap. v., 48 is the text, all agree in regarding it as a delineation of the Messianic kingdom, though they differ in details. Compare, for a striking metaphysical analysis of this sermon, and a philosophical explanation of the metaphysics which underlie it, a pamphlet by John Hecker, of New York, on "The Scientific Basis of Education."

† See Luke xix., 11. ‡ Romans xiv., 17.

ing, "the life more than meat, and the body than raiment." The springs of joy are within the soul. Blessedness of spirit is more than blessedness of circumstance. This truth is set forth by the enunciation of a series of laws, by which, also, he declares that there is in the spiritual realm a principle of compensation; that each trait possesses its own peculiar privileges; that the fruits of the Spirit are not one, but many.

Blessed are—not the high-spirited, who make the world's heroes, but—the poor in spirit, for to them the door of repentance and confession, which alone gives admission to the kingdom of heaven, opens with ease.

Blessed are they that mourn, for in the consolations which the God of all comfort affords them, prophetic of that hour when he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, there is a sweeter joy than in laughter and merriment.

Blessed are the meek, strong in the "unresistible might of weakness;" for, though they may possess less than their more trenchant neighbors, diligent to have and sensitive to defend, yet they understand far better the art of enjoying what they possess, and so are the real inheritors of the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for this ambition alone is never disappointed; and as the Bank of Heaven never breaks, so they whose wealth is in the Spirit are never in danger of insolvency.

Blessed are the merciful, not only because their tender consideration of others reacts in tender regard by others for themselves, but because to the froward God will show himself froward, and to the merciful God will show himself merciful.*

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they see that God who is veiled to ordinary vision, whom much searching can never find out†—a truth which modern theology has yet to learn—but who is as easily reflected in a pure and loving heart as the sun in the clear waters of the placid lake at Jesus's feet.

* 2 Sam. xxii., 26, 27; Psalm xviii., 26; Prov. iii., 34. † Job xi., 7.

Blessed are—not the war-makers, who ride into their earthly kingdoms over the prostrate forms of their conquered foes, but—the peace-makers, whose lips not only speak words of peace to combatants, but the silent influence of whose saintly presence is such as speaks peace to troubled souls, as twilight brings sweet quiet to nature; for to men these shall carry the most evident tokens of their adoption, and shall not only be, but shall be recognized as, the children of the Most High.

Finally, blessed are those whose invincible faith and high ideals subject them to a martyr's life in their own generation, for they shall receive not only coronation in the next, but a nobler coronation in the unseen world, whose great white throng have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb by following his footsteps and sharing his sufferings.* This spirit of self-sacrifice is of the essence of Christianity. It is the saline principle in the salt. It is the few in every age who are willing to suffer for their convictions, not the many who hold their convictions lightly, that alone save it from corruption. It is ever the Moses who chooses "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,"† who redeems his generation from the bondage of Egypt. The earthly crown of the princes of God is ever a crown of thorns. And it is only by a voluntary crucifixion for the truth that the Christian lets his light so shine before men that they glorify his Father who is in heaven.

Thus the kingdom of God is portrayed as one of character, not condition; as one of tribulation in the world, but as one of good cheer also, because of the victory of faith which overcomes the world.‡ Surely we may pity the man who can see in this etching nothing but the "Gospel of Ebionism." The kingdom of God is indeed "conceived as the advent of the

* Rev. vii., 14. † Heb. xi., 25.
‡ John xvi., 33; 1 John v., 4.

poor."* But "the poor of God," rightly says Augustine, "are poor in heart, not in purse."†

The reformers of every age are accounted its heretics. The thief cries "Stop thief!" louder than do his pursuers. Christ has already been charged with preaching a lax morality and pandering to the loose morals of the multitude, "just as the Pope and his crew," says Martin Luther, "raise an outcry and rail at us as heretics who forbid good works."‡ He is declared to be an overturner of the law. And this charge brought against him by his foes, it is easy to see, will yet be taken up by his friends, who, because they are called unto liberty, will think that they are released from the obligations of law, not knowing that the law of liberty is more inviolable than that of bondage. This charge, therefore, Christ carefully and indignantly repels. His disciples are not to imagine that he has come to preach an easier righteousness than that of Moses or the Pharisees. He has come, not to destroy the law, but to fulfill. Not a jot or tittle shall pass away without fulfillment. And whosoever shall relax§ its least obligations shall be least in the kingdom of heaven; for the righteousness of his disciples must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees who reproach them with irreligion.‖

In a series of four specifications, Jesus discriminates between the principles of the kingdom of God and the enactments of the commonwealth of Moses. His discrimination has been a cause of considerable perplexity. There are still many who imagine that Christ has abolished the ancient law that he may substitute one of his own.¶ Judaism and Chris-

* Renan's Life of Jesus, chap. xi., p. 176.

† "Pauper Dei in animo est non in sæculo."—Augustine, quoted in Alford.

‡ Tholuck, Sermon on the Mount, p. 176.

§ "Whosoever shall *break* one of these least commandments"—Greek λυση —relax.

‖ Matt. v., 17–20.

¶ Marcion boldly reversed the text, and substituted the reading, "Think not I am come to fulfill the law or the prophets; I am not come to fulfill, but to destroy." The same substantial view is still maintained, though by no such audacious criticism.

tianity are set in contrast, and the latter is supposed to have been built upon its predecessor, as the civilization of the Anglo-Saxon has been constructed in part out of the ruins of that of Greece and Rome. By others it is conceived that Jesus fulfills the spirit of the ancient law by the infraction of the letter,* though he distinctly asserts that not one jot, *i. e.* the smallest letter, nor even one tittle, *i. e.* the smallest fraction of a letter, shall perish unfulfilled. By yet others it is supposed that he supplements the imperfection of the past enactments by additions of his own;† and by still others, that he confers upon them a new meaning, filling up the outlines which Moses roughly drew, as the painter fills up the rude sketch which constitutes his model.‡ There will be, however, no difficulty in comprehending that the discrimination which Jesus has drawn in this discourse is itself the strongest confirmation of the principles of the Mosaic legislation, if we will remember what we are prone to forget, that the laws of Moses were for the regulation of the nation; the laws of Jesus are for the government of the individual. It is indeed true that some principles of personal conduct may be easily deduced from the Mosaic statutes. This is especially true of the Ten Commandments, the Hebraic Constitution. But they were not proposed for that purpose. They are not adequate to that end. And the attempt from the civil laws of the Great Republic to deduce principles of personal conduct produces that spirit of Pharisaism, that external compliance with what is necessarily an external law, against which a true Christianity is an ever-living protest. The most perfect obedience may make an orderly community—it can never make a true man. The whole Decalogue may be accepted as the law of the life,

* So, seemingly, Tholuck, Sermon on the Mount, p. 183; and Lange, quoting Tholuck, "There is a fulfillment of the letter which breaks the spirit; a fulfillment of the spirit which breaks the letter.—Lange, Life of Christ, vol. ii., p. 403. † *Socinus*, quoted in Tholuck, Sermon on the Mount, p. 187.

‡ *Theophylact*, quoted in Alford *in loco*. To these opinions should be added that of the Jews, who insist that, by Christ's own showing, the Mosaic law is still binding on mankind.—Tholuck, Sermon on the Mount, p. 177.

and still the scrupulous citizen shall ask, in his inmost heart, "What lack I yet?"*

Moses was the founder of a commonwealth. All his enactments perished in the using with the death of the nation of which they were the statute law. Jesus is a builder of character, and his enactments shall last till time shall be no more. It was thus that Christ came to fulfill a law which he was falsely charged with abrogating, by implanting such principles for the regulation of individual conduct, and imbuing with such life the individual heart, that the sanctions of an external law would be no longer necessary. Certainly that man has arrived at but a low state of morality who is kept from theft by the law of the state, "Thou shalt not steal;" and he has been taught the truest fulfillment of that law who has imbibed such principles of honesty as make him quite oblivious of the statute.

This distinction between the life of the state and that of the individual is the key to the interpretation of the contrast between the civil statutes of Moses and the spiritual laws of Jesus.

Moses had made careful provision for the protection of life and limb.† But, as the state can only regard an overt act, he inquired into the motive only for the purpose of determining the criminality of that act when committed. Christ, laying down the law of the individual character, forbids that anger of the heart which is ever the inspiration of a violent and bloody hand.‡

Moses had prohibited that adultery which, since it is high treason against God's first and most sacred institution, the family, can not with justice be disregarded by the state.§ Christ, recognizing the truth that chastity in heart is the household god whose presence alone can give the home true benediction, forbids, what the state can not prohibit, lustful thoughts, and declares that it is better for a man to walk

* Matt. xix., 20.
† See *ante*, chap. ii., p. 33, 34, and notes.
‡ Matt. v., 21–25.
§ Exod. xx., 14.

through life blind, than to have eyes that inflame his heart with evil desires.*

Moses, guarding the nation against the combined vices of profanity and falsehood common to all Oriental nations, gave to the oath that judicial sacredness which still, in all Christendom, attaches to it.† Christ, perceiving that all such solemn asseverations in common conversation spring from a latent consciousness that the mere statement is unentitled to the highest confidence, demands such measure of truthfulness that simple yea and nay shall need no strong indorsers.‡ In this he undertakes to regulate only individual intercourse; he does not speak of those judicial proceedings wherein the state demands some more solemn sanction; and he took himself, without hesitation, the solemn oath administered to him by the Sanhedrim on his final trial.§

Moses, guarding the individual against personal revenge, and the citizen against cruel and unusual punishments, provided a rude but simple expedient in the *lex talionis.* The measure of a man's punishment was the mischief he had done: "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, wound for wound, strife for strife."‖ Of this law, wisely adapted to a rude and barbarous age, the gallows alone now remains, a relic of the past. Christ inveighs not against this statute as a principle of administration of public justice, but he condemns its adoption as a principle for the regulation of private conduct. In commanding the smitten to turn the other cheek, he says nothing against the employment of force by the community for the protection of its citizens, but he condemns the employment of force by the individual for the punishment of offenses personal to himself.

Moses, who had commanded the Jew to love his neighbor, had also carefully forbidden him to associate with the sur-

* Matt. v., 27–32.
† Exod. xxii., 11; Levit. xix., 12; Num. xxx., 2; Deut. vi., 13.
‡ Matt. v., 33–38. § Matt. xxvi., 63, 64. ‖ Exod. xxi., 23–25.

rounding Gentile nations,* an association fraught with danger to the Hebraic nation in its infancy. From these prohibitions the Pharisees had deduced the precept "Thou shalt hate thine enemy," an injunction which they obeyed with the greatest unction. Jesus, not impugning that national policy, which, however strange it may appear in our altered circumstances, was one of self-preservation at the time of its adoption, lays down that law of love in personal intercourse of which his whole life is the best exemplification, and the consummation of which is found in the closing sentences of this part of his discourse. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.† Patience, purity, truth, and love, inspiring the heart and wrought out in the life, these are the principles which Christ inculcates. The soul that is thoroughly transfused with them will unconsciously fulfill the law of the state, which rests as a yoke uneasy to be borne only upon those whose natural inclinations to revenge, license, falsehood, and selfishness in conduct it but imperfectly represses.‡

Christ next proceeds to contrast the principles of the kingdom of God with those which characterize the reformed religion of the land—Pharisaism. In this he enters into an analysis of motives, and, seeming to violate his own precept, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," really interprets the exception which he appends, "Cast not your pearls before swine."

The three good works of Pharisaism, like those of the Roman Catholic Church, are alms-giving, prayer, and fasting. Nothing that Christ says can be deemed to detract from their vital importance. They are the language of three of the cardinal Christian virtues—love, piety, and humility. But lan-

* Deut. xxiii., 6.

† Matt. v., 43–48. Perfect, Greek τελειοι, "complete in your love of others; not one-sided or exclusive, as these just mentioned, but all-embracing and Godlike."—Alford on Matt. v., 48.

‡ 1 Tim. i., 8–11.

guage is only the vehicle of thought, and these services have too often degenerated into mere soulless babbling. Christ inveighs against that spirit of essential irreligion which substitutes quantity for quality, which confounds the act with the motive. That the world still needs to study his admonitions will be evident to any who consider how the words which are significant of states of the soul have degenerated into mere descriptions of conduct. By charity we mean no longer love, but giving to the poor, and "cold as charity" has passed into a proverb. Benevolence no longer signifies well wishing, but large giving. Character and reputation are continually used as synonyms. Against this superficial holiness, which confounds seeming and being, Christ earnestly warns his followers.*

Alms-giving was rightly held in high honor among the Jewish people. At their feasts they never forgot their poor.† By poet and prophet this virtue was accounted among the chiefest evidences of a genuine piety,‡ and, descending to the successor of Judaism, it became one of the most characteristic features of the early Christian Church.§ But in that age, as in this, the value of the act was measured by the amount of the contribution, and not by the motive which prompted to it. Of all the many widows who have cast in their mite, the one whom Christ pointed out in the Temple has alone become immortal. How much of our modern so-called benevolence rests really in the praise of men is sufficiently attested by the fact that every philanthropic society finds it indispensable to its success to publish to the world the names of its supporters and the value of their contributions. Christ does not forbid the employment of such means. He does not even condemn such benevolence. He declares that it shall have the reward that it seeks, the praise of men. But a good bargain is not an eminent Christian virtue; and he who looks alone for the reward of his own heart, and the approval of his

* Matt. vi., 1–18.
‡ Psalm xli., 1.
† Esth. ix., 22; Neh. viii., 10.
§ Acts ix., 36; x., 2; Gal. ii., 10.

heavenly Father, will give as Boaz gave to Ruth,* as God perpetually gives to us—under cover.

Prayer was not less ostentatious than alms-giving. The Jew, like the Mussulman, had his appointed hours of prayer, and at the given moment went through his mechanical devotions with as much punctuality as a clock, and with about equal emotion. There were not wanting those who were careful to be in the market-place at the hour, that the fullness of their devotion might be seen. The synagogue, too, stood always open for purposes of prayer, as does with us the modern cathedral; and the pious Jew measured his piety by the number of his petitions, as the pious Romanist too often estimates his devotion by the number of his Ave Marias and Pater Nosters.† He who spent entire nights in communion with his Father, and who openly invoked his blessing at the tomb of Lazarus, and acknowledged with gratitude his providence and love before the multitude, neither condemned much prayer nor public prayer, but much speaking and prayer for the sake of publicity. The voice of praise and prayer may well ascend to the throne of the heavenly Father from the great congregation, but the man whose public prayers outrun in fervor his secret devotions may well doubt the genuineness of his piety.‡

* Ruth ii., 15–17.

† "Every one that multiplies prayer is heard."—Lightfoot, quoted in Alford in loco.

‡ The Lord's Prayer is supposed by many scholars to have been given at another time, and to have been inserted here by Matthew, chap. vi., 9–15, because cognate to the subject. Luke says that it was given by Christ in response to a request of the disciples (Luke xi., 1), who would hardly have asked him to teach them with the implication that in this respect his teaching lacked something which John the Baptist afforded his followers, if he had already given them this form of prayer in his inaugural discourse. It seems more fitting, too, for private instruction than for a public discourse. So Neander, Ebrard, Pressensé, and Olshausen. Lange supposes that the disciples asked for and received this prayer before the sermon, and immediately after the night of prayer. Tholuck, Stier, and Alford suppose the prayer to have been twice given—once to the public, as in Matthew, and once to the disciples, as in Luke. I shall refer to it again. See Chap. XXVI.

Even the superficial reader of the Old Testament will hardly need to be reminded how prominent a characteristic of its pious men was their fasting.* Their humiliation was always a public one. They clothed themselves in sackcloth; they sat in ashes. The extent to which their badges of mourning were worn is indicated by the fact that the King of Nineveh commanded that even the beasts should share the garments of sackcloth with their masters.† Christian preachers still quote this heathen fast as an example to the Church of Christ. The argument for such an exhibition is specious. The more public the humiliation, the more complete it would seem to be. Openly to confess one's sins is deemed to be the highest and most difficult exercise of humility.

In truth, because it is so regarded, Christ dissuades from it. Humility is a recognized virtue. Public confession is often only a public boast; and the pride of humility is the most dangerous of all forms of pride. The Christian confesses to God by his prayers, to the neighbor whom he has injured by his open retraction, but to the community only by his reformed life. If, in days of sorrow, fasting becomes the natural language of his overburdened heart, as it often does to the mourner in the hour of poignant grief, Christ dissuades him not from fasting, but he cautions him against giving public expression to his humility; he even recommends to his disciples to contrast with the dissimulation of the Pharisees a "certain dissimulation of face,"‡ that to men they seem not to fast.

Vanity is the first vice of Pharisaism; greed is the second. They desire to serve God. They are determined to serve the world.§ The same religion which fasts often, prays

* Exod. xxxiv., 28; 1 Kings xix., 8; Judges xx., 26; Ezra viii., 21; Esth. iv., 3, 16. † Jonah iii., 5–8.

‡ Stier, quoted in Lange, Life of Christ, vol. ii., p. 425.

§ Matt. vi., 19–34. This passage is believed by Neander not to belong to the Sermon on the Mount, because it is not found in Luke, and does not seem to him to belong in logical order to this discourse. But Luke's account is evidently fragmentary, and any delineation of Pharisaic righteousness which

much, and gives great tithes, heaps up in monastic establishments untold stores of wealth. And still the Church endeavors to compensate for a doubtful morality through the week by the liberality of its contributions on the Sabbath. Many are those who have diligently engaged in the endeavor to solve the problem how to serve both God and mammon ever since the days when Naaman asked in the same breath from the prophet of God earth to build an altar to Jehovah, and license to go through the forms of a courtier's worship to Rimmon.* But the problem is not yet solved, nor like to be; for no man can be the slave of two masters.

In this attempt at a divided service is the secret of all wear and worry. He that enters Christ's army may safely trust the commissariat with him. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," is his sufficient security. This promise has indeed puzzled many a worshiper of mammon. But he who enlists for the bounty, and presents this draft on God, demanding clamorously his earthly pay, attests by this very act that he has not complied with its conditions, and turns often disappointed away. That man who truly seeks first the righteousness of God in his own heart and in the community, will learn, with Paul, having food and raiment, therewith to be content; and if he will read with care this Sermon on the Mount, he will see that he is promised nothing more.

Censorious judgment is the product of egotism and the accompaniment of selfishness. The critic is the poorest of all judges, since he lacks that sympathy which alone unlocks the secret of another's life. "It is only as we feel with man that we can know him." All other judgments react upon the censor. For with what judgment he judges, he is judged in turn—a law which has its clearest illustration in the history of the Jews themselves, who, having always con-

did not depict their essentially worldly character would lack a most essential feature of the portrait.

* 2 Kings v., 17–18.

sidered the Gentiles as the children of the devil, have lived for ages under the ban of contempt in the midst of the Gentiles, alike despising and despised. Yet some estimate of character the Christian minister must have, that he may adapt the food he dispenses to the character of his auditors —that he may not cast his pearls before swine.*

It remains in a few brief aphorisms to direct the way by which a man may enter the kingdom of God. What is the process of naturalization? If any ceremony constituted the Christian substitute for the rite of circumcision; if any public service was required to signalize the disciples' entrance into the kingdom of heaven, here would have been the place to record it. But on this point Christ is silent. He depicts two conditions—two only, faith and obedience. Eternal life is the gift of God.† Already he has assured the Samaritan woman of this.‡ Whoso truly desireth this gift, let him ask and it shall be given to him. But it is not every asking that receives. Nay! strait is the gate, and narrow the way, and few there be that find it. The promise is to all "who, *by patient continuance in well doing*, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality."§ False prophets will arise to pamper the pride and appeal to the prejudice by pointing out some other way than practical righteousness. They are to be known by their fruits. Truth is instrumental, and the best test of truth, the easiest of appreciation, and the most reliable, is the character it produces. For the man is more than the brand he bears. A doubtful doctrine is far less pernicious than a doubtful life. "The worst of heresies," says Cecil, "is lack of love." There are many who doubt this now who will not doubt it at the last; for the man whose foundation consists only in his acceptance of Christ's truth has built on sand. He whose religion consists in practical obedience to Christ's precepts has built on rock. And by-and-by, like

* Matt. vii., 1–6.
† Romans vi., 23.
‡ John iv., 10.
§ Romans ii., 7.

the terrible tornadoes that sweep with such destructive fury through the East, the judgments of God will come, and many a life will be found in ruins, and many a more homely hut will abide.

This solemn warning, the significant impressiveness of whose imagery we do not easily apprehend, closes the discourse, and the people, released from the spell which bound them, attest to each other the power of his teaching who speaks "as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

CHAPTER XVIII.

POPULAR FAVOR.

FROM the Mount of Beatitudes Jesus returned with his disciples to the Sea of Galilee. It was not enough that he teach his disciples; he must train them as well. They were to proclaim no new philosophy. They were to announce with authority the kingdom of God as at hand. For this purpose it was necessary that they should first themselves get a glimpse of it. They were to preach Christ Jesus the divine Messiah of mankind. For this purpose they must read in his miracles and his teachings his divine commission. That they might be ministers of his Word, it was needful that they should be eye-witnesses of his works.* Descending from the mount, they continued, therefore, with him in his renewed ministry through the towns and villages of Galilee. The few broken threads of history, which are all they have left us, can not be woven into a perfect pattern. We only know that every where it was a ministry of mercy; that every where the people witnessed with wonder his works, and welcomed with ardor his teachings.

Without, however, attempting to give a connected narrative of this period of his ministry, we may profitably group together a few of its more significant incidents.

Such an incident was the cure of the centurion's servant.

The organization of the Roman army resembled in some important respects our own. A century, consisting of from fifty to one hundred soldiers, answering to our company, was

* Luke i., 2.

the unit in the organization. The centurion was the captain of this company. Stationed in every town, they were charged with the duty of preserving order, and maintaining the authority of the hated Roman. A task sufficiently odious in itself, it was rendered doubly so by the method in which it was performed. The Roman soldier was cold, hard, unsympathetic. He repaid with interest the intolerant scorn of the Jew; and the dreadful scenes of carnage which characterized the final destruction of Jerusalem a few years later were only the consummation of a remorseless scorn, which had already, in petty persecution, made the Roman yoke intolerable. The Roman was not exactly cruel, but he felt as little remorse in killing a Jew as a housewife feels in killing a spider.

Capernaum was blessed, however, in being the residence of a rare Roman. Unlike his companions in arms, he possessed a warm nature, which the æsthetic religion of Greece and the stately service of Rome failed to satisfy. He had viewed with loving eyes, if he had not actually embraced, the religion of Jehovah. He had built in the town a synagogue. He had lightened, so far as might be, the yoke of military government. He had so administered it as to win the regards of the Jewish Rabbi, a rare miracle of love. Of tender nature, his slave was no mere chattel, but almost as a son.* Cicero half apologized for manifesting any affection for a slave. This Roman centurion, touched by the anguish of his dying servant, made no effort to conceal his sympathies.

He secured the interest of the elders of the synagogue. They brought his case to Jesus. "Gentile though he be," said they, "he is worthy, for he loveth our nation, and has built us a synagogue." This was the highest encomium a Pharisee could pass upon a Gentile. Judaism was the only worth. Love for Judaism was the Gentile's only hope of pardon for his heathen birth.

Christ immediately complied with their request. But on

* Called in Matthew viii., 6, ὁ παίς μου.

his way thither a second deputation met him. The centurion, who perhaps had heard of the cure of the nobleman's son,* sent to suggest to Jesus that a word from him would be sufficient. "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof," said he. "Neither is it necessary; for at thy command diseases come and go as slaves and soldiers come and go at mine.†

Christ seized the occasion as a text to enunciate more clearly the principle that his kingdom was not a national restoration—a principle, the bare hint of which in Nazareth had produced a mob. In contrast with that worth which the elders alone recognized, he set the higher worth of faith. "Not even in all Israel," said he, "have I found faith so great. Such men as these are they that will become the citizens of my kingdom. And they will come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south—from every nationality, that is—while the unreceptive Jews, incapable of relaxing their hold upon the traditions of their fathers to receive that new life which the Son alone affords, will be cast out."‡

Popular audiences seldom grasp great principles. The people were very willing that this Gentile centurion, who was personally popular, should be admitted to the privileges of their new theocracy; and how little they comprehended the general assertion that Christ broke down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile is evident from the fact that not till several years later, and then under the influence of a supernatural vision, was Peter enabled to perceive that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."§ In fact, the Christian world has not yet understood this. And it still tries our narrow faith to believe that God can accept any man who has not been taught in our catechism and trained in our conventional religious customs. Whether there are even any crumbs of mercy that fall from the children's

* John iv., 46–54. See *ante*, chap. xi., p. 138, note.
† Matt. viii., 8, 9. ‡ Matt. viii., 11, 12. § Acts x., 34, 35.

table to the ignorant heathen dogs is a hotly-contested point in modern theology.

Christ seems to have complied with the suggestion of the centurion, and the messengers, returning, found the servant whole that had been sick.*

If to any Jesus seemed merely a great physician, which doubtless was the first impression produced by his cures, two events that occurred at this time must have corrected that misapprehension. For death was subject to him. The dead to him seemed merely sleeping. Twice, at least, the reluctant gates of Hades opened at his command, and released from imprisonment their captives.

The ruler, that is, as we have previously explained, the minister of one of the synagogues at Capernaum, perhaps the very one which the centurion had erected, had an only daughter who lay very sick and near to death. He had doubtless heard the great teacher expounding the Scripture on the Sabbath. Perhaps he had witnessed the cure of the demoniac† or the healing of the withered hand.‡ Perhaps he was one of the very elders who had come to intercede with Christ for the centurion. He left his daughter on her dying bed to beseech succor of Jesus. This was his last hope. To his fears she seemed to be even now dead when he had reached Christ's side.§ Jesus went immediately with him. And on reaching Jairus's house, for such was the ruler's name, he found the father's fears to have been true prophets. The maiden was dead.

In the Orient yet more than with us, mourning customs are conventional. Fashion dictates them. The friends of the dead beat their breasts, make the house resound with their lamentations, cover their heads, cut their flesh, put on the

* Compare, for full account of this healing, Matt. viii., 5–13, with Luke vii., 1–10. For reconciliation of seeming differences in the two accounts, see Trench on the Miracles. † Mark i., 23–26. See *ante*, chap. xiii., p. 169.
‡ Mark iii., 1–6. See *ante*, chap. xv., p. 210. § Matt. ix., 18.

habiliments of grief, and rend their garments. There are with them, as with us, various shades of grief nicely expressed in external symbol. The length of the tear in the clothes is accurately determined by the relation of the deceased. Professional women, skillful in the simulation of grief, are hired to swell the songs of lamentation on these occasions.* Acquainting themselves with the private sorrows of their auditors, and interweaving in their chants the story of their woes, they evoke their tears as well, and thus add amateur to professional weeping. Such was the scene which Christ found enacted in the house of the prelate when he arrived.

Christ's whole ministry is a perpetual protest against hypocrisy and conventionalism; and certainly, of all hypocrisy, that of grief is the worst. He ordered all these skillful pretenders from the room; then, taking the maiden by the hand, her father, and mother, and three of his chosen disciples alone being present, he bade her arise, presented her alive and well to her astonished parents, and, calming their too intense revulsion of feeling—a revulsion sometimes accompanied with danger to the sensitive—commanded that they should give to her, famished by disease, the nourishment she needed.†

Christ's declaration concerning Jairus's daughter, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," may have been taken then, as it has since been, literally;‡ and, despite the testimony of the surrounding friends, ancient as well as modern critics may have asserted that it was only a case of syncope; but in the raising of the widow's son at Nain there was certainly no opportunity for doubt.

The little village of Nain§ lies on the south side of the Little Hermon, looking down into the plain of Esdraelon, two or

* Jer. ix., 17, 18.

† Matt. ix., 18, 19, 23–26; Mark v., 22, 23, 35–43; Luke viii., 41, 42, 49–56.

‡ Even Olshausen so interprets it. But it has been well observed that the language is the same as that which Jesus uses respecting Lazarus, which he himself interprets. John xi., 11–14.

§ Then a city. Luke vii., 11.

three hours' distance from Nazareth, on the road to Jerusalem. As Christ, accompanied by his disciples, and followed

NAIN.

by the multitude, who constituted a sort of volunteer body-guard wherever he went, entered the gates of the town, they met a funeral procession, accompanying a widow to the burial of her only son in the cemetery of the town, which, by Jewish law, was always placed outside the walls. A strange scene was that when these two processions met. On the one side, entering the city of life, a joyful band, following with glad acclaim the King of Life, hanging on his words, hailing with wonder his works of love. On the other, a wailing company, beating their breasts, wringing their hands, filling the air with their lamentations, going out to the city of the dead, accompanying to his last imprisonment the captive of the invincible conqueror.

By Jewish custom, he who met a funeral procession was

expected to join it, to mingle his tears with those of the unknown mourners, and to swell the host who followed the dead to his burial-place. Thus already this widow was followed by no small concourse, and her own grief was felt by the heart of the whole city. The lamentations of the multitude were of little meaning; but when Jesus saw the unbidden tears of the widow herself he was touched with compassion.* He bade her weep no more. He came to the open bier, stopped those that bore it with that air of authority which none ever thought to dispute, took the hand of the uncoffined corpse, and said, while with wondering, expectant awe the by-standers awaited his words, "Young man, *I* say unto thee, Arise." The chains of death fell from him; emancipated, he arose and began to speak, and Jesus delivered him to his no longer weeping mother, while, awe-stricken, the people in whispers questioned of each other who this might be to whom death itself was obedient. They no longer hailed Jesus as a Rabbi, or accounted him the Great Physician. From all lips was extorted the concurrent testimony, "A great prophet is risen up among us;" and "God hath visited his people."†

Not less over nature than over death and life did Jesus show himself a divine *Imperator.*

The Sea of Galilee, sunk several hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and hemmed in on every side by lofty mountains, their faces furrowed with gorges cut by the water-courses, is peculiarly subject, as most lakes among the mountains are, to severe and sudden storms. In such a valley the untamed wind plays strange pranks, possesses no steadiness of purpose, veers from point to point with perpetual and perplexingly unexpected changes, and comes and goes in fitful gusts. Out of the cloudless sky the northern winds come trooping down from Mount Hermon's snowy peak, and in an instant this so deceitful lake will lose its na-

* "When the Lord saw *her.*"—Luke vii., 13. † Luke vii., 11–16.

tive placidity, and foam and rage in its mountain bed like a maniac in his dungeon. Jesus had already procured a boat, in which, with his disciples, he could avoid the throng that followed him every where else,* and he was fond of going out with these fishermen to escape, on the comparatively uninhabited eastern shore, the crowds which characterized the western, or to rest on the calm of the lake itself; for nothing affords a more perfect repose of soul than to sail out upon such waters by starlight, and to lie on the gently-rocking waves, seeing the glancing lights and hearing the hushed murmur of the neighboring city, and yet feel yourself wholly separated from it, and free from all its claims and calls. Thus alternately the mountains and the sea gave Jesus the solitude he craved.

On one such occasion, at the close of a day's preaching, he had entered into their little boat, and, lying down in the stern, had fallen fast asleep. Wearied with his labors, he slept soundly. One of these sudden tempests broke upon them. The lake was lashed to fury; the waves ran high, and began to beat in upon them. These bold fishermen, to whom an ordinary storm was only a pleasurable excitement, perceived that this one they could not weather. The danger was imminent. Arousing Jesus with a half rebuke for his sleeping—impatient, as we are apt to be when perturbed or anxious, at the placidity of another—they demanded of him somewhat curtly if he cared not that they all perished. Jesus quietly asked them what had become of their faith in him; then, turning, spoke to the winds and waves with voice of authority, "Peace; be still!" and the storm ceased as suddenly as it had commenced. This new display of authority over nature filled with new wonder these disciples, who had known him as yet only as a prophet, not as a divine Messiah; for it was only little by little, through just such incidents as this, they were to learn the nature and authority of the king whose coronation they were to proclaim.†

* Mark iii., 9. † Matt. viii., 23–27; Mark iv., 37–41; Luke viii., 22–25.

Harder to quell is the soul-storm that ravages the mind of the poor maniac than that which furrows the surface of the lake. And these manifestations of Christ's power over nature were followed by an equally wondrous manifestation of his power over mind.

Six or seven miles southeast of the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee still are to be found in the modern Um Keis the ruins of the ancient and once proud and flourishing city of Gadara, which gave its name to all the surrounding country, as still the modern city sometimes gives its title to the county in which it is placed. This country of the Gadarenes is a wild and rocky region. The limestone hills abound in caves where still are found the evidences of their ancient use as sepulchres; and on the shore of the lake, here precipitous, troops of wild hogs still feed on the esculent roots with which the soil abounds.

As Jesus and his disciples landed on this eastern shore, near the town of Gergesa, whose ruins constitute the site of the modern Chersa,* a fearful apparition threatened them with new danger; for out of one of these natural sepulchres there

* A striking confirmation of the accuracy of the evangelical narratives is afforded by what has been heretofore regarded as a contradiction between them. Matthew, the reader will notice, describes the event as occurring in the land of the Gergesenes, or as some manuscripts have it, Gerasenes (Matt. viii., 28), while Mark and Luke describe it as occurring in the land of the Gadarenes (Mark v., 1; Luke viii., 26). This seeming contradiction has thrown, in the minds of some rationalizing critics, doubt over the whole narrative. The city of Gerasa, far to the south, midway between the Lake of Tiberias and the Dead Sea, does not in any respect answer to the condition of the narrative. The city of Gadara, three hours to the south of the southern shore of the lake, is so far distant therefrom that if the miracle had been wrought in the vicinity, the swine "must have run down the mountain an hour and a half, forded the deep Jermuk, quite as formidable as the Jordan itself, ascended its northern bank, and raced across a level plain several miles before they could reach the nearest margin of the lake, a feat which no herd of swine would be likely to achieve, even though they were possessed."—Thomson's Land and the Book, vol. ii., p. 35. But Dr. Thomson has discovered (see *supra*) the ruins of the ancient town of Chersa, or Gersa, directly on the shore of the lake, the surroundings of which exactly answer to the descriptions of the evangelists. This town, so insignificant that it has escaped

came rushing down to meet them two maniacs, one of whom especially had an aspect so dreadful as to cause his companion to be almost unnoticed. Naked, a few fluttering rags the only remnants of clothing left upon him, covered with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the broken fragments of chains dangling to his limbs, he rushed forward to revenge this invasion of his domains, which no traveler knowing of his presence dared to enter. For the moment it seemed as though the waves had only surrendered their prey to a death more awful at the hands of this raving maniac. But with a look Jesus halted him; with a word he turned his threatening violence into a beseeching cry. Whom the sane knew not, this poor possessed recognized as the Son of the Most High God. And the devils that had purposed death, thwarted in their purpose, besought that they might not be themselves destroyed before their time.

Then occurred an event which is confessedly mysterious, if not inexplicable. In vain do we attempt to interpret it by recalling cases in which beasts catch the impress of human feelings; in which horses, for example, share the panic of their riders; or dogs are possessed with the rage of their masters.* Equally in vain the proffered explanation that the last struggles of this poor demoniac and his unearthly screams struck terror to the neighboring swineherd; that, "as the devil had before spoken by his mouth, it now acted by his hands."† They ask permission to go into a herd feeding on the adjoining cliff; receive it; and the two thousand swine, seized with

the attention of previous travelers, was unknown to the Roman world. Mark and Luke, therefore, who wrote for the Gentiles, described the miracle as occurring in the country of the Gadarenes, a description which would have been readily comprehended, since Gadara was one of the chief Roman cities of Palestine, and widely known. Matthew, who was a tax-gatherer on this very shore, and familiar with every village and hamlet, and who wrote for Jewish readers, described it as occurring in the country of the Gerasenes, or Gergesenes, thus fixing to their minds its locality more definitely. See Thomson's Land and the Book, vol. ii., p. 34–37.

* So Lange, Life of Christ, vol. iii., p. 15.

† So Pressensé, Life of Christ, p. 376.

a sudden panic, themselves inexplicably possessed, rush violently down the cliff and are destroyed. To the people of the neighboring town it is nothing that a townsman is saved. Their swine are killed; and they do not understand how much better is a man than a beast. They beseech this prophet to depart out of their coasts. He complies. His boat bears him and his companions back to Capernaum. And Gadara never sees again the Lord, whom for a herd of swine it has thus rejected.*

Such are some of the incidents which characterize this period of Christ's itinerant ministry—a period of constantly increasing popularity. He has not yet begun to foreshadow his crucifixion. He has not yet preached — at least not plainly—the doctrine of the cross. This rock of offense and stone of stumbling has not yet blocked the narrow way. All the people rejoice in his mighty works, and unite in proclaiming that God has visited his people. The story of his miracles runs from mouth to mouth. Every town vies with its neighbor to receive a visit from this inheritor of the power of the ancient prophets, this seeming restorer of the ancient theocracy. At first he is only a rabbi,† then a great prophet;‡ at length the wondering people begin to ask if he be not the long-expected Messiah.§ If a few wise and conservative men shake their heads doubtfully at his strange doctrines and erratic ways—as we shall presently see they do—they have not as yet the power materially to abate his growing favor with the common people, who have neither discerned with the Pharisees the revolution that lurks in his teaching, nor, still less, with the few attached disciples, perceived with deeper insight the liberty which that revolution will insure. A prophet has come—not to theocratic Judea, but to despised Galilee, and all Galilee is in a holiday because of him.

* Matt. viii., 28–34; Mark v., 1–21; Luke viii., 26–40.
† John iii., 2; i., 38; vi., 25. ‡ Luke vii., 16. § Matt. xii., 23.

Jew* and Gentile† alike taste of his beneficence, and recognize in him the life of the world. The poor blind men‡ and the honored prelate§ alike rejoice in his visitation, and feel the power of his word in lost sight restored, in ebbing life called back again. At his voice diseases flee away. The blind are made to see; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the dead are brought to life; and, strangest of all, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.‖ The great underlying population, ignored, despised, are ignored and despised no longer. It is an age of popular ferment. The long-slumbering people are awaking in this dawning hour of civilization. In ancient Rome the popular uprising has broken the power of the proud nobles, and Cæsar has built his empire on the once despised plebeian classes. In Greece the philosophy of the few is losing its power; the civilization of the past is already effete, because it is not the civilization of the masses. Christ, in Palestine, addresses himself to the popular heart; and the amazed Pharisees wonder to find in the ready response of the gathering multitudes that there is a popular heart which they can no longer despise.

The people themselves, amazed to find a Rabbi who understands their wants, enters into their life, selects his disciples from their number, and is not reluctant to eat even at their tables, are not less attracted by him than by his miracles—the catholicity of his love, itself the greatest miracle. Wherever he goes crowds gather about him. Curious to gaze upon this new prophet, they throng the streets through which he passes.¶ Women accompany him, and minister to his simple wants out of their substance. Among them are some of considerable social distinction.** His journeys are triumphal processions. No house can give him privacy.†† Invited to dine, the host finds himself the reluctant entertainer of an in-

* Matt. ix., 18. † Matt. viii., 5. ‡ Matt. ix., 27–31.
§ Matt. ix., 18. ‖ Matt. xi., 5; Luke vii., 22.
¶ Mark ii., 15; v., 24; Luke vii., 11; viii., 45.
** Luke viii., 1–3. †† Mark ii., 1, 2.

numerable rabble, that block up the street, and overflow into his court-yard and his dining-hall.* The press is so great that the people are sometimes trodden under foot.† Christ's meals and sleep are broken in upon.‡ His own mother tries in vain to get to him through the impenetrable crowd.§ He procures, as we have said, a boat, and in this, with his disciples, he sometimes escapes from the throng, and seeks retirement on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee;‖ but the people follow him on foot.¶ He hides among the mountains; they search him out.** When he returns, the people are waiting to receive him.†† He cautions those whom he cures not to bruit their cures about;‡‡ but in vain. In the expressive language of the evangelist, "He could not be hid."§§ Wherever he goes he is a messenger of mercy. His preaching is now literally a gospel—glad tidings of great joy. He awakens hope alike in the breast of the despairing sick and the despairing sinner. The scene at Peter's house, which made memorable the Sabbath that inaugurated his ministry at Capernaum, is repeated in every town.‖‖ Virtue seems to reside in his very garments. The fringe that bordered the Rabbi's cloak, placed there by divine command, was a perpetual reminder to the wearer that he was one of God's peculiar people.¶¶ The sick crowded to lay hold even upon this,*** and not always in vain, as one poor woman proved, who had spent her time and substance in unavailing attempts to obtain relief from a long-continued complaint.†††

So the day-star rises to its zenith, while there gather in the horizon the clouds in which its earthly light is yet to be extinguished.

* Matt. ix., 10. † Luke xii., 1. ‡ Mark iii., 20.
§ Matt. xii., 46–50. ‖ Mark iii., 9.
¶ Matt. xiv., 13; Mark vi., 33. ** Mark i., 37.
†† Luke viii., 40.
‡‡ Mark i., 34, 44; Luke iv., 41; Mark iii., 12; Matt. xii., 16; Luke viii., 56. §§ Mark vii., 24.
‖‖ Matt. iv., 23–25; Mark iii., 7, 10; Luke viii., 1.
¶¶ Numb. xv., 37–40; Deut. xxii., 12. *** Matt. xiv., 36.
††† Matt. ix., 20–22; Mark v., 25–34; Luke viii., 43–48.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRIESTLY ENMITY.

QUITE different was the reception which the priestly party acorded to Jesus, for we have portrayed but one side of the picture. There is another. Christ's adherents were all from the common people. His disciples were of the peasant population. His Church was composed of the stuff which the Jewish Rabbis would not have in theirs. Not a single man of mark in all the Holy Land was an open and avowed follower of Jesus,* though some cherished a real regard for him. The wise men had worshiped at his cradle once for all. No wise men followed him now.

Judea had already declared against him. He had broken their Sabbath traditions. He had proclaimed himself the Son of the Most High, so making himself equal with God. The Sanhedrim at Jerusalem had pronounced him guilty of these charges. Spies had tracked him back to Capernaum.† The same high court that had sent out its delegation to cross-question John the Baptist, sent out a second to watch this new heretic, that threatened the truth and Church of God. They dogged his footsteps every where. They watched him in the corn-fields. They accused him of Sabbath-breaking in the synagogue, and they stirred up the suspicions of the fanatical throughout all Palestine. Still there was as yet in Galilee no open breach between him and the Pharisaic party. Pharisees still invited him to their houses.‡ On one or two occasions they gave feasts, seemingly in honor of him; but to the most honest among them he was a paradox. They were suspicious of this "friend of publicans

* John vii., 48. † Mark iii., 22. ‡ Luke vii., 36; xi., 37.

and sinners." They watched him with critical eyes. They measured him by their party standards. They waited to see whether, so tried, he was "orthodox." If he did not avouch their creed, belong to their party, and help to build up their Church, he could not be the Messiah, nor yet a true prophet; for were they not the custodians of the Word of God, and the ordained co-builders of the theocracy?

The counts in the indictment which was gradually forming against him already began to be serious and many. Let us endeavor to gather and combine them.

The age seemed sadly out of joint. The signs of the times, to the eyes of the Pharisees, were all significant of danger. And truly so; for the day of their death and of the destruction of their nation was hastening on. Events were prophetic of those divine judgments so soon to overwhelm the land which, for its iniquities, the prophet had seven hundred years before designated as the land of Sodom and Gomorrah.* The horizon was black with the clouds of the coming wrath-storm. The nation lay prostrate at the feet of a heathen empire. The sceptre had departed from Shiloh, and, despite their proud boast, the seed of Abraham were in grievous bondage to a hated despot. The holy temple had been polluted, and nothing but the blood of its imperial conquerors could, to their thought, wash out the stain. The Temple of Jove and the Church of God stood side by side in the no longer Holy Land. No prophet's voice had been heard upon these sacred hills for many years. At last, indeed, a descendant of the long-lost prophetic order had preached for a few months in the wilderness the Gospel of Repentance, warning of danger and dehorting from sin. But the hand of violence had abruptly broken off his career, and in the castle of Machærus, a lonely prisoner, the Baptist awaited his approaching death. Not strange, then, was it that these Pharisees asked impatiently, "Is this a time for feast-

* Isaiah i., 9, 10.

ing and merriment? Is it not a time for fasting and sackcloth?"* The disciples of John shared their perplexity, and even John himself seems in his exile to have participated in the doubts with which the Pharisees inspired them.†

For, though Christ preached the duty of repentance, he neither practiced fasting himself, nor inculcated it upon his disciples. He distinctly and emphatically repudiated all outward marks of humiliation. He told people, if they must fast, to show no sign of it.‡ His religion was one of feasting and joyousness. His processions were all wedding processions. The whole week was a long succession of gala-days. When from the receipt of customs he called the odious tax-gatherer to follow him, he asked him not to show his repentance by fasting, penances, and prayers, but accepted his invitation to a feast, where his old Gentile and half heathen companions also rejoiced with him in his conversion.§ The feast which he afterward described as provided by the father for his prodigal son‖ was simply a poetic embodiment of that festal joyousness which characterized his portraiture of the life which he had come to inaugurate upon the earth. That the Pharisees in their age could not comprehend this will seem less singular to those who reflect that eighteen centuries of education has not sufficed to remove from even the Christian religion those garments of austerity and gloom which she has borrowed from the heathen world, and that to the present day the festal scenes which Christ so habitually graced are considered by a large proportion of Christendom as inconsistent with the highest type of piety. We have not yet learned that it is only in the far country that the prodigal feeds on husks, and is robed in rags; that his return to his father's home is to be celebrated, not with sackcloth and fasting, but with the fatted calf, the best robe, and scenes of festivity and rejoicing. These are not the customary symbols of the sinner's return and his acceptance with God.

* Mark ii., 18.
† Matt. xi., 2, 3; Luke vii., 18, 19.
‡ Matt. vi., 16–18.
§ Luke v., 29–39.
‖ Luke xv., 21–24.

It is true that when the disciples of the Baptist came for an explanation of the reason why, in the midst of the general gloom, he proclaimed alike by his life and his lips a religion of glad tidings of great joy, he made some attempt to explain it to them. He reminded them of one of the Baptist's own sermons.* He told them that the bridegroom had come, and that the children of the bride-chamber could not mourn while he was with them. With sad prevision looking forward to the future days of darkness and of persecution, he intimated that even his Church would know in the future occasions for that fasting which was now uncalled for.†

But it was impossible to explain to the Pharisees a phenomenon utterly, and, from the nature of the case, inexplicable to them. He lived in a different atmosphere—a different life. To him the kingdom of God had already come. He saw in the travail of the dying theocracy the birth of the new.‡ While the eyes of the people were fixed upon the tomb in which the glory of the past was buried, he saw rising therefrom the glorious spirit of the regenerated future. It was impossible for him to point out to them a sight which he alone could see, or make them comprehend its unseen glories. As, later, Mary wept at the empty tomb, while her risen Lord, recognized only as the gardener, talked with her, so now out of the vacant tomb of the dead past, at which the disciples alike of the Pharisees and of the Baptist stood weeping, a risen Messiah also stood, but as yet unrecognized, unknown.

Not only was Jesus thus accused of indifference to the degeneracy of the age, but of fostering it by preaching a lax morality; of disregarding not only the traditional observances, but also the written law; of overturning not only the ceremonies, but also the moral enactments of Moses, and so

* John iii., 29, 30.
† Matt. ix., 14, 15; Mark ii., 18–22; Luke v., 33–39.
‡ John xvi., 21, 22.

of commending himself to the people by the simple but popular arts of the demagogue, who, alike in Church and State, purchases a brief popularity by preaching to the people their exemption from law, whether of God or man.

He had, indeed, indignantly denied this charge. He had asserted that not even a jot or a tittle of the Mosaic law should pass away unfulfilled. But he had to their minds obviated the force of this declaration by asserting in the same breath that he came to fulfill it. And in great detail he had gone over some of the principal enactments of the Mosaic law, and had distinctly declared that perfect compliance would not give admittance to his kingdom. For the statutes which he had substituted he had given no authority. He had quoted neither the Hebrew Scriptures nor the Pharisaic traditions. He had, with what seemed to them an unparalleled audacity, put himself above the founder of their ancient state, in the phrase oft repeated, "Ye have heard that it hath been said. But I say unto you." Thus, though in form he had denied their charges, in substance, to their apprehension, he had justified them;* for, doubtless, their life-long training in the conventionalism of the schools had rendered them incapable of appreciating that spiritual obedience which springs from a heart inspired by a devout love to God and fraternal love to man. To them, as to many now, allegiance and liberty were antagonistic words. Religion and legalism were synonymous. That there is, or can be, a religion that forgets the law it complies with—nay, that the highest obedience is unconscious obedience—Pharisaism has never comprehended.

But if the preaching of Jesus aroused their suspicions, his practice confirmed them. The Pharisees were Purists, Separatists. Their very name indicates their nature. They wore righteousness as a warrior his mail. They applied to this life that motto which belongs only to the next, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." "He that doeth the

* Matt. v., 17, 48.

deeds of the law shall live by them," was their only recognized principle of life. They knew no doctrine of repentance. With all their washings, they knew no fountain that could cleanse from sin. To be pure was to be separate from sinners.

When, therefore, Christ summoned from the receipt of customs a half heathen tax-gatherer, they murmured among themselves. When he accepted the new convert's invitation, and sat down with him and his old friends to a great feast, they brought it against his disciples as a serious, if not a conclusive accusation.* When he called to him his twelve chosen apostles, they felt more strongly than ever that it was impossible for them to recognize, still less to join, a Church among whose appointed leaders there was not a single priest, scribe, or Pharisee. When they looked on the rabble which followed him, they said, contemptuously, "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?"† When, in his Sermon on the Mount, repudiating the essential principle of Pharisaism, he declared that God loved alike the evil and the good, and appealed to nature to attest the truth of his declaration,‡ it doubtless seemed to show no less a profanation of Jehovah's name that they were unable to answer his appeal to the facts of Providence. That he could be the friend of publicans and sinners, and yet the friend of purity and holiness; that love is medicinal; that the pure may enter as a physician the domain of vice to cure it without feeling its contagion, this surpassed their comprehension. By his course Jesus seemed to them to obliterate all moral as well as all social distinctions; to preach and practice a lax morality, as well as to overthrow the most sacred rites and sanctions of religion.

For the Pharisees measured men by their approximation to a somewhat conventional standard of piety. In this respect we still resemble them, though the standard has in some respects changed. Belief in a certain creed, the practice of

* Matt. ix., 10, 11; Mark ii., 15, 16; Luke v., 29, 30.
† John vii., 48. ‡ Matt. v., 43–48.

certain though very simple ceremonies, the liberal support of certain ecclesiastical institutions, and the maintenance of certain social moralities, stamp a man to-day, in popular estimation, as religious. Christ measured men by their capacity for improvement. The tax-gatherer, who had enriched himself by false accusations, was, in the hour when he promised restitution, more a child of Abraham than the Jewish noble who had observed all the law of Moses from his youth up.* The prodigal son, who had spent his all in riotous living, and through a life of debauchery had come to know his want, was nearer the kingdom of God than the elder brother who had never wandered, but who felt within him no higher and unsatisfied soul-needs.† For the weeping harlot there was more hope than for the self-contented priest.‡ This measure of humanity we have yet to learn. Aspiration, not attainment, is the true standard of character. From the Pharisees Christ turned away, not because they were Pharisees, but because there was in them no readiness to receive improvement. Their religious life was stereotyped; the plates were cast and could not be corrected. He turned to the publicans and sinners, not because they were sinners, but because in them life was still in the form, and might easily be corrected.

A simple incident occurring at this time gave point to this Pharisaic criticism of the course of Jesus.

He had been invited by a certain Pharisee to dine with him. In the Orient the house does not possess the same sacred privacy as with us. A feast to a prominent Rabbi is measurably a public reception. Strangers enter without intrusion as by-standers and auditors. The room is thus often filled up with uninvited guests. Among those who followed Jesus to this Pharisaic house was a certain woman of the town. Possibly her dress betrayed her.§ More probably she

* Luke xviii., 18–23; Matt. xix., 16–22. † Luke xv., 11–32.

‡ Luke vii., 36–50.

§ There is reason to suppose there was something peculiar in the arrangement of the head-dress of such women.—Kitto's Bib. Cyc., art. Harlot.

was a somewhat notorious character, and recognized as such by the host. As we have already said, the proximity of the Roman court afforded a fearful facility for the nefarious traffic of the courtesan. She had already been touched by Jesus's words, and drawn to him by that overflowing life of love which no words are able to interpret to us. New desires for another life had been awakened in her. She had looked with envy upon those women who accompanied Jesus, and ministered unto him. As the ardent wish to enter his kingdom flamed up within her bosom, and the utter hopelessness of such a one as she ever doing so oppressed her, the great tears welled up and began to drop, unconsciously to herself, on the feet of Jesus, as he lay, in Orient fashion, at meat.* She looked for something to wipe off these desecrating drops; knelt down, took her long tresses, and tenderly wiped them. But no sooner had she taken those feet, which, secretly and in shame, she had followed, than the ardor of a passionate love for one who had first awakened hope within her soul made her forgetful of the time, the place, the lookers-on, all proprieties—she covered them with kisses; then, drawing from her bosom that ointment which she employed in her sinful life,† she consecrated it to him, and marked with characteristic devotion the purpose she could not frame into words by tenderly anointing with it those weary feet she was privileged to embrace.‡

Christ divined his host's uneasy thoughts. If Jesus were indeed a prophet, he would have recognized these unhallowed hands. That he would have suffered their polluting touch if he had indeed recognized their character never occurred to this Purist; for can a man touch pitch and not be de-

* Our Lord would, after the ordinary custom of persons at table, be reclining on a couch on the left side, turned toward the table, and the feet would be behind him.—Alford on Luke vii., 38.

† Trench on the Parables.

‡ It was a custom to anoint the head and clothes on festive occasions among the ancients. See Eccles. ix., 8; Amos vi., 6; Isaiah lvii, 9. Compare also Matt. xxvi., 6, 7; Mark xiv., 3; John xii., 2, 3.

filed?* But Jesus, in that simple but never to be forgotten parable of the two debtors, teaching the full and free forgiveness of God, declared that the penitence of love was better than the pride of purity, and that the very fullness of this woman's love was the best attestation of the fullness of the forgiveness she had received; and, turning to her who stood now trembling and abashed before him, brought back to self-consciousness by his recognition of her involuntary homage, he pronounced her sins forgiven, and bade her go in peace.†

It is in no wise likely, however, that Simon, for such was the Pharisee's name, understood, or at least appreciated the lesson. It is certain that no minister could submit to such a demonstration now without subjecting himself to most trenchant criticism; and the most catholic Christian charity, despite this lesson, has, in this nineteenth century, scarce a nook for this class of sinners, to whom the heart of God, however, is always open, and with difficulty accords to them any road to reformation, whom Christ by name invited to participate in his kingdom.

A certain air of authority, and a certain assumption of dignity which characterized Christ's ministry, while they attracted the common people, offended their Rabbinical leaders. Of these assumptions, involved as they were in the subsequent trial for his life before the Sanhedrim, we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter. It now suffices to remind the reader how, in the synagogue at Nazareth, he had pointed to himself as the one who was to inaugurate the acceptable year

* The touch of an unclean person was defilement.—Alford on Luke vii., 39.

† Luke vii., 36–50. There is no adequate evidence to sustain the tradition which identifies this woman with Mary Magdalene, a tradition which has, among scholars, only the name of Lange for its support.—Lange's Life of Jesus, ii., 152, 153; iii., 82–89. It is repudiated by Alford, Ellicott, Wordsworth, Stier, Meyer, and Olshausen. See Smith's Bible Dict., art. Mary Magdalene, p. 258, b. Neither is this incident to be confounded with the later one by Mary at Bethany (Matt. xxvi., 6, 7; Mark xiv., 3; John xii., 2, 3), with which it has almost nothing in common. See, for a discussion of this point, Smith's Bible Dict., supra, and Trench on the Parables.

of the Lord;* how, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he had defended himself from the charge of desecrating the Sabbath by pointing out the fact that the Temple service justified an habitual exception to the Sabbath law, and claimed for his service an equal exemption;† how, twice in Galilean homes, without pretense of priestly function, he assumed to pronounce sins forgiven;‡ how, in the Temple at Jerusalem, he had justified his working on the Sabbath by claiming for himself the same right in this regard which was exercised by his Father, God,§ and how, in all his preaching, he appealed to Scripture not often, to reason less, to tradition never, his highest authority being a simple "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you."‖ Let us not wonder that to these Jewish Rabbis, who recognized in Jesus only the son of Joseph, these assumptions would seem blasphemous. It could not well be otherwise. They can only be justified by the faith which perceives in him the Son of God.

But, if their conscience was shocked, still more their pride was wounded, for pride brooks nothing so illy as the self-assertion in another of superiority; and Christ not only assumed such superiority, but, worst of all, the people with almost universal acclaim accorded it to him.

For, after all, the greatest ground of complaint against Jesus was that the people believed in him. They crowded the synagogues to hear him, and, when the rulers no longer left open that door of access to the multitude, they crowded to hear him in the streets and fields.¶ In every conflict they sided with him; in every defeat of his adversaries they rejoiced.** His success was his greatest crime. If he had gathered but few auditors, he would have been pitied, not pun-

* Luke iv., 21.
† Matt. xii., 5, 6.
‡ Matt. ix., 2; Mark ii., 5; Luke vi., 20; Luke vii., 47–50.
§ John v., 17.
‖ Matt. v., 18; vi., 16, 25; Matt. viii., 10; x., 15, 23, 42.
¶ Matt. v., 1; viii., 1; xiii., 1, 2; Mark iv., 1; Luke viii., 4.
** Luke xiii., 17; xi., 27.

ished; but his influence measured their decay, and there were none among them that, with John the Baptist, recognizing the fact, "He must increase, but I must decrease," could with John the Baptist say, "My joy, therefore, is fulfilled."* Pharisaism had fulfilled its mission. Its death-hour had come. But the dying rarely recognize their own decay, and, despite the signs of the times, it struggled hard, though unavailingly, for its life.

Thus wider and wider grew the chasm between the populace and the Pharisaic party. The more the people gathered about Jesus, the more their leaders withdrew from following and from fellowship. Already, with the sword of Truth, Jesus was cleaving the nation in sunder, and setting family against family. Magnetized by his truth, it lost already its putrescent peace, and gathered in antagonistic currents about opposite poles. Judgment had, in truth, already come to the earth. Humanity separated itself; and, from this time forth, more and more it has flowed in divergent streams, the issue whereof is in that final separation which will be seen when the encrowned King shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

In this growing antagonism there was one argument which the Pharisees could not countervail—the argument which Christ silently addressed to John the Baptist—the Miracles.†

The miracles are no longer the best evidences of Christianity. Nay, Christianity is itself the best evidence of the miracles. The full-grown tree is the clearest attestation of the fact that the seed has sprouted. The superstructure itself witnesses the firmness of the foundation which it hides from view. The wonders of the past, effaced by the hands of time, grow dim, and the faith of the Church rests less on the works Jesus wrought in the first century than on those which Christ is performing in the nineteenth.

But that century which had not the greater miracle of an

* John iii., 30.

† Matt. xi., 4–6; Luke vii., 21–23.

immortal Christianity, possessed the lesser works which attended its advent among mankind. Jesus, come to found a kingdom, possessed the signet-ring of the Most High, and impressed its seal on nature and on man as his credentials. The faith of the people in Jesus rested not in the purity of his life and doctrines, which they did not appreciate, but on "the miracles, wonders, and signs which God did by him."* They who could not understand how this man should forgive sins, could understand that "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up."† Even Renan is compelled reluctantly to admit, as matter of indisputable history, that "only miracles and the fulfillment of prophecy could, in the opinion of the contemporaries of Jesus, establish a supernatural mission,"‡ and that, without the miracles, "the truth would not have been propagated, and the world had not profited by the immense moral superiority which his (Christ's) Father had imparted to him."§ It does not seem to have occurred to Renan as possible that God was as wise as himself, and took the precaution that his truth should not lack this necessary attestation to give it acceptance among men.

The Pharisees, at all events, could not and did not attempt to deny the reality of the miracles.‖ They were matters of common observation and of universal belief. But apparent miracles are not always conclusive evidence of a divine commission. The witch of Endor, without authority from God, seemed to summon the spirit of Samuel from his shadowy resting-place.¶ The magicians of Egypt vied with Moses in working miracles with their enchantments.** The Jews thoroughly believed in a king and a kingdom of evil. Satan was no shadowy embodiment of human guilt, but a real and potent person. Sharing, in a modified form, the dualism which in part they may have borrowed from the philosophy of Per-

* Acts ii., 22. † Matt. xi., 5.
‡ Renan's Life of Jesus, chapter on Miracles. § Ibid., p. 116.
‖ John xi., 47. ¶ 1 Sam. xxviii. ** Exod. vii., 11, 22; viii., 7, 18.

sia, they believed in a perpetual, though not doubtful conflict between the Prince of Darkness and the God of Light, and the miracles of false prophets and of false religions they attributed, not to sleight of hand, but to supernatural though diabolic agency.

The miracles of Jesus left the Pharisees but one alternative—to acknowledge his divine commission, or to charge him with complicity with the devil. They chose the latter, and he compelled them to proclaim their position. Thus:

As Jesus was teaching in Galilee, there was brought to him a demoniac, a peculiarly sad and hopeless case, already deprived of both sight and hearing. Christ cast the devil out, and so effectually healed the victim that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.* The amazed people began to suspect at last that Christ was more even than an inspired prophet. "It was never," they said, "so seen in Israel."† "Is not this," they asked, "that promised son of David who should come to re-establish the throne of his Father?"‡

The Pharisees dared not openly stem the current which was thus setting so strongly toward Jesus; but among themselves, those that had come down from Jerusalem§ whispered their contempt.‖ This fellow, said they, does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. He has indeed come to establish a kingdom, but it is the kingdom of evil. He possesses supernatural powers, but they are those with which Satan endows his agents.

An open enmity is better than a secret one; and Jesus, who might well have read their thoughts in their faces, if he had not in their hearts, unearthed them, and by his calm but powerful invective compelled the conflict for which they were not yet prepared. "Satan," he said in substance, "does not work against himself. The wonders of the magician were wrought, not to emancipate, but to enslave Israel; not to glorify, but to withstand Jehovah. These very Pharisees

* Matt. xii., 22, 23. † Matt. ix., 33. ‡ Matt. xii., 23.
§ Mark iii., 22. ‖ Luke xi., 17.

assume to exorcise evil spirits. Is their power also borrowed from Beelzebub? No! The people are right, and the ecclesiastics wrong. If by the power of God the devils are cast out, then is the kingdom of God truly come; for first must this old tenant of the human heart be bound before he can be despoiled of his ancient possession. Let these Pharisees beware. There is an unpardonable sin.* It has not been committed by the Roman who has oppressed the people of God; nor by the publican who has participated in that oppression that he may share in its profits; nor by the drunkard, the violence of whose appetite it would seem that nothing but divine power could quell; nor by the harlot, who has sold more than her birthright for less than a mess of miserable pottage; but the ecclesiastic, who in the Church opposes all reformations and renovation, the divine instrument of which the Church was meant to be, in the name of God deliberately withstands the cause of God, and not only employs the livery of Jehovah to serve the devil in, but imputes the livery of Satan to the Son of God, he is in danger of passing that great gulf fixed which even divine love can never bridge. In the Church, not without it; among the irreligious and ungodly professors of religion rather than among the openly vicious and profane, are chiefly to be found the unpardonable sinners—they that, "wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight," call evil good, and good evil; put light for darkness, and darkness for light; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter—in one word, God for Satan, and Satan for God.†

Surprised by this sudden unmasking, the Pharisees remon-

* It belongs to the theologian rather than to the historian to define the unpardonable sin, which indeed Christ seems to have left purposely somewhat undefined. It is doubtless correctly described rather as a *state* than an *act* (Alford *in loco*), consisting not so much in any specific sin as in that general hardness of heart in which it becomes inaccessible even to the influence of God's Holy Spirit, one of the chiefest indications of which is openly attributing the evident work of God to the agency of Satan. But it is certainly significant that Christ warns of it only those who, in the Church of God, deliberately oppose God's cause. † Matt. xii., 22–37; Luke xi., 17–23.

strate. They assume to be impartial investigators; to be ready to acknowledge Christ's divine commission upon the presentation of adequate evidence. "Master," they say, "we would see a sign from thee."* But no sign could convince them. It is the will, not the intellect, which needs to be changed. And Christ, refusing their request, declares that it is the Pharisees who have cast out the devil by the prince of devils, and that the Jewish nation, cleansed by their reformation of its idolatries, but inspired with no new life, is like a man from whom the single devil has been cast out only that seven devils may take his place, who make his last state worse than the first.†

Thus, at length, war is openly declared between Jesus and the Pharisees—that war which, descending a legacy to his successors and to theirs, will only cease when Christ shall have perfectly purified his people of all pretense, stripped them of all disguises, and presented his Church faultless before the throne of his Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing.

* Matt. xii., 38. † Matt. xii., 39–45; Luke xi., 24–26, 29–32.

CHAPTER XX.

PARABLES AND PHILIPPICS.

HENCEFORTH the teaching of Jesus undergoes a marked change. He more and more distinctly announces the radical principles of his kingdom. He foreshadows the necessity of conflict and of self-sacrifice in order to its establishment. To the simple enunciation of a gospel which is glad tidings of great joy to all people, he adds weighty denunciations of those who, having shut themselves out of the kingdom of God, will not suffer others either to go in.* He begins to use more evidently that fan which John described as being in his hand, and wherewith he would thoroughly purge his Church.† This change in his teaching is seen alike in his addresses to the Pharisees, to his own disciples, and to the common people.

Now, for the first time, he openly warns the people to beware of the corrupting influence of Pharisaism. Hypocrisy is the characteristic sin, as it is the greatest danger of corrupt and degenerate times. Against it he has already warned his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. But now, before crowded audiences, he denounces the religious teachers of his day as hypocrites.‡ He borrows the invectives of his forerunner; describes the Pharisees as a generation of vipers;§ compares them to a poisonous tree which can only produce poisonous fruits;‖ their influence to leaven, secret, insidious, and therefore the more powerful.¶ He points out the folly of their concealments by foreshadowing the judgment when

* Luke, xi., 52. † Luke iii., 17. ‡ Matt. xv., 7. § Matt. xii., 34.
‖ Matt. xii., 33. ¶ Matt. xvi., 5–12; Mark viii., 13–21.

"there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known."* They are perpetually demanding some miraculous sign of his Messiahship.† He exposes the false pretenses of this demand. They study the heavens for the signs of the weather. They know from clouds in the west that a shower is at hand; from the south winds that desert heats are coming. But they can not discern, because they will not study, the signs of the times.‡ The very air is full of portents. Elias has come in John the Baptist, last of the prophets, forerunner of his Lord. The nation has listened with awe to his teachings. The Pharisees alone have rejected him whom they could not use. And now a greater than John the Baptist is in their midst. Least of the miracles which he has wrought are those on the blind, the deaf, the possessed, the sick, the dead. The whole nation, aroused from its lethargy at his words, as was the only son of the widowed mother, witness to the life-giving power of his doctrine. The worst, the wickedest, the abandoned, the very dregs of Galilee, have turned their backs upon their haunts of vice to welcome him who alone has ever warmed their hearts to love. A greater sign than gave authority to the teaching of Jonah, a greater glory than robed Solomon, characterizes the advent of him who is greater than the prophet or the king. Asserting this, Jesus warns them that the Queen of the South and the city of Nineveh, heathen though they were, will rise up in the day of judgment to condemn these hypocrites that recognize not their Lord, and refuse to acknowledge his royalty, to receive his love, or to heed his solemn warnings.§

He rebukes, in caustic terms, that spirit of willfulness which led them to turn deaf ears alike to the Baptist's proclaiming of the law and his own heralding of the Gospel. He compares them to children at play in the market-place, who sit willful and sullen, refusing every call to join in the

* Luke xii., 1–3.
† Matt. xii., 38; Luke xi., 16; John ii., 18; vi., 30.
‡ Luke xii., 54–56.
§ Matt. xii., 38–42; Luke xi., 16, 29–32.

games of their comrades. John came preaching the law, warning of judgment, inviting to sackcloth and ashes, to tears and fasting. The Pharisee declared he had a devil. Jesus himself came eating and drinking, and inviting to a life of liberty and a religion of joyfulness. They sneeringly said, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." They would neither dance when Christ piped, nor weep when John mourned. But the divine wisdom, which speaks in different tongues and employs different methods, now with seeming severity in John the Baptist, now with invincible love in Jesus, will be justified, Jesus says, by all the true children of God.*

The days are full of violence. The blood of a Jew is naught to a Roman. In the crowd that gathers at Jerusalem on every great feast-day are always some turbulent spirits, impatient of Roman bondage, and not intelligent enough to see that their riotings only make the yoke sit heavier upon their necks.† In the Temple a tumult has lately been raised, the soldiery have been called in, and the people have fallen unwilling sacrifices on their own altars. A tower, too, has recently fallen in Siloam, and killed eighteen, who were buried beneath its ruins. These events have made an impression on the public mind. Christ seizes them; he ordains them prophets. These scenes of violence, he says, are but the distant mutterings of the gathering storm. Nothing but genuine repentance can avert it. He sees, with prophetic vision, the dreadful scenes of carnage which, later, characterize the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Roman legions become

* Matt. xi., 16–19; Luke vii., 31–35. Such we understand to be the meaning of this passage, in spite of Alford (in loco) and Lange (Life of Christ, vol. iii., p. 111), who give a reverse interpretation, making it the Pharisees who have alternately invited John the Baptist and Christ to join their mimicry. But it is not against waywardness, nor even against hypocrisy, that Jesus is warning here, but against a sullen rejection not merely of John the Baptist and of Jesus, but of God, by whom both were sent, though in a different sense, and who thus, by opposite methods, endeavored, though unavailingly, to reclaim his people.

† See Josephus, Antiq., xvii., 9, § 3; 10, § 2; Wars of the Jews, ii., 9, § 4.

high-priests of cruelty and death; when the streams that flow from the Temple run in a ruddy torrent, swollen and red with the blood of the Jewish priests and the Jewish people; and when the falling walls of the sanctuary, which God no longer recognizes as his own, whelm thousands in its own destruction. With solemn mien, he points to these foreshadowings of that scene of carnage and death. "Except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish," he says—perish, that is, by the same sword of the Roman, and by the like crumbling wall.*

He adds solemnity to this warning by a figure borrowed from one of the ancient prophets.† He compares the Jewish nation to a householder's favorite fig-tree. It has enjoyed rare advantages. The law, the prophets, the Church of God, and his peculiar providences have been the portion of this favored people. But it has borne no fruit save in Pharisaic piety. Nay, because of it, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles;‡ and Jesus warns his audience that the object of divine culture is divine fruit, and that this barren nation will not be suffered long to cumber the ground. The patience of God, that waited a hundred and twenty years before the Deluge destroyed a sinful race; that listened with willing ear to Abraham's intercession for the cities of the plain; that bore long and suffered much with the Jews in past wanderings, is now well-nigh exhausted. Already the edict has gone forth, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" an edict whose instant execution only the intercession of Christ has for a little longer stayed.§

He openly denounces the Pharisaic ceremonialism. The dry and dusty soil, the custom of traveling with unprotected feet, the habits of the table, each guest helping himself with his fingers from a common dish, render, in the Orient, constant ablutions necessary for cleanliness. Religious considerations

* Luke xiii., 1–5. There is nothing to fix the date of the incidents here referred to. We follow Robinson in placing Christ's reference to it here. Townsend (New Test., p. 125), Milman (Hist. of Christianity, p. 105), and Andrews (Life of our Lord, p. 366) put it later.

† Isa. v., 1–7. ‡ Rom. ii., 24. § Luke xiii., 6–9.

add their sanction to the custom. Frequent washings were prescribed by Moses alike for sanitary and for ceremonial purposes.* The ritualism of Egypt, of Persia, of Greece, resembled in this respect that of Palestine. To the present day the Moslem washes five times a day, that he may be clean to approach Allah acceptably in prayer. These ablutions, always performed in public, had been a matter of rigorous religious observance with the Pharisaic party. An elaborate code prescribed the method of the ritual; for to cleanse the hands was not enough; they must be ceremonially clean. For this purpose they must be plunged into the water three times up to the wrists; to pour the water upon them did not suffice. The open palm of the one hand must be rubbed with the closed fist of the other. The water must be fresh; must have done no work; must be not running, but contained in a proper vessel; must be in quantity a full quartern. Any failure to observe these and kindred rules vitiated the whole ceremony. Combined, they constituted a considerable treatise in the Jewish Mishna. The commentaries on them would fill a volume; for what really constituted compliance with them was a perpetually perplexing problem. The water must be fresh; but is that which has been kept so by the intermixture of vinegar or lemon-juice ceremonially fresh? It must not have done any work; but has that water done any work in which fish have been bred or eggs have been boiled? Such were the religious problems which, with serious faces, the Pharisaic doctors of the law discussed. On these they made the salvation of the soul depend.

It is hardly necessary to say that such a ritual was practically disregarded by the common people. It was only the High-Church party whose conscience was tender as to the mode of washing; for the rest, clean hands were enough, and Christ, who had called his disciples from the peasantry, innocent of all such ritual, had no thought of imposing it upon them. He openly contemned this ceremonialism. He de-

* Exod. xix., 10–14; xxx., 17–21; Levit. viii., 6.

clared that not the food that enters into the body, but the evil thoughts, and words, and deeds which proceed out of the heart, defile the man.* He acknowledged that he transgressed the traditions of the elders; but from those traditions he appealed to the written word of God, which, by their interpretations and subsequent legislation, they had made of none effect;† and, remonstrated with by his disciples, who feared to offend so influential a party, he responded that the Pharisees were as blind as the people whom they pretended to lead, and, with all their scrupulousness, were ever falling with them into pollution. "If the blind lead the blind," said he, "both shall fall into a ditch."‡

But example in such a matter is far more potent than precept, and Christ's example was not wanting to interpret his teachings.

He was invited, on one occasion about this time, by a Galilean Pharisee to a breakfast or lunch§ at his house. He sat down with his disciples without the ceremonial washing, and was at once assailed for his uncleanness.‖ Now uncleanness had a technical meaning in Palestine, and was a serious charge. He that was unclean was cut off from all social privileges. He was, for the time, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. He was in a position analogous to that of an excommunicant in the Middle Ages. "He could not go about town; he could not enter into another man's house; he could not eat with his friends; he could neither kiss his wife nor fondle his child; still less could he enter into the synagogue or into the Temple court. A civilian, he was driven from society; a soldier, he was thrust from the camp. So long as a Jew remained unclean—a week, a year, a whole life it might be—he had no right to any place in Israel."¶ Under the law of Moses, this exclusion from society, which

* Matt. xv., 11, 17–20. † Matt. xv., 2–9. ‡ Matt. xv., 14.

§ Luke xi., 37. Greek, *αριστηση*.

‖ The reader will of course understand that this did not involve any disregard of personal neatness. ¶ Dixon's Holy Land, vol. ii., p. 60.

was partly an act of quarantine, and partly a symbolic act to keep alive the sense of sin and sensitiveness to purity, was inflicted only on those suffering the *major* pollution. But to the Pharisee every pollution was *major*. If he but touched a Grecian vessel, or brushed his garments against a heathen neighbor, he became as impure as if he had committed adultery. He might wanton in vice with less condemnation than disregard a washing. Already, if we may believe Jewish legend, one Rabbi, for sitting down to meat with unwashed hands, had been solemnly excommunicated and stoned to death.

The accusation was therefore not slight, nor its consequences unimportant.

Jesus replied, with severity, that purity depends on the condition of the soul, not on the state of the skin, and that, careful as the Pharisees were about washing the hands, their hearts were full of violence and malice. The grave was the very epitome of uncleanness to the Jew. He would not enter the city of Tiberias because it was built upon the site of an ancient cemetery. Jesus declared that the Pharisees were like unseen graves, full of corruptions, whose very presence tainted the air. He sharply satirized their ceremonial conscientiousness. The law of Moses provided that one tenth of the fruit of the earth should be paid in taxes. The Pharisees tithed the least of their garden herbs, but were oblivious of the declarations of the ancient prophets, often as they were read in their synagogues, that justice, mercy, and the love of God were of more importance than all the ceremonial law.* Remonstrated with by a Jewish Rabbi, an interpreter of the law, for his too sweeping denunciation, Jesus straightway included him and his co-teachers in it. They were falsely called teachers, for they had taken away the key of knowledge, and, by their traditions, they had buried the prophets whom their fathers killed, and for the same reason —that their voice might not reach and awaken the common

* Luke xi., 37–44.

people; wherefore upon them, worthy successors of their fathers, would come all innocent blood, from that of the first martyr, Abel, down to that of the Zacharias who, in the days of Joash, endeavoring to dissuade the people from relapsing into idolatry, perished by the hand of violence in the Temple courts.*

The calmness of Christ added severity to his invective. His voice was that not of a passionate advocate, but of a judge. The Pharisees, laying aside all poor pretense of impartiality, from this time forth endeavored, though in vain, to provoke Jesus to some inadvertent act or unseemly words which might impair his popularity with the common people.†

This open conflict awakens the fears of Christ's kinsfolk. They half incline to give credence to the charge that he is possessed of a devil; at least, that he should initiate such a conflict seems to them sufficient evidence that he is no longer himself. To the worldly-wise, those who act under the influence of spiritual enthusiasms always seem crazy. Even his mother's fears outrun her faith, and she joins her sons in the attempt to rescue him from his hazardous position, and bring him to his home.‡ But Christ has consecrated himself wholly to his work. He is prepared to illustrate his own aphorism, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."§ Interrupted in one of his discourses by the word that his mother and his brethren desire to speak with him, he declines to accede to their request, and says that henceforth whoever does the will of his Father in heaven is brother, and sister, and mother to him.‖ He that is

* 2 Chron. xxiv., 20–22. There can be but little doubt that this is the Zacharias referred to. His death produced a profound impression upon the nation. There was a legend that eighty thousand priests had perished in later times to atone for his death, but that his blood was never washed away till the Temple was burnt at the Captivity. It is possible that the addition in Matt. xxiii., 35, "son of Barachias," may be a corruption of the text. This Zacharias was the son of Jehoiada. See Alford on Matt. xxiii., 35, and Smith's Bible Dict., art. Zacharias, § 6.

† Luke xi., 45–54.

‡ Mark iii., 20, 21.

§ Matt. x., 37.

‖ Matt. xii., 46–50; Mark iii., 31–35; Luke viii., 19–21.

joint-heir with Christ inherits more than a throne or a kingdom. He inherits with him a place in the household of God, and a joint legacy of divine paternal love. To be the brother of Christ and the son of God—have we ever measured the full meaning of these words!

Christ's disciples evidently share the fears of his family. They warn him that he has offended the Pharisees.* To them he seems to be closing the only door to the successful establishment of his kingdom.

His instructions to them, therefore, are henceforth full of reassurance. At the same time, he does not attempt to veil the future from them. He tells them that he has come, not to bring peace, but a sword.† He hints at the baptism of blood with which he will consecrate himself and give victory to his love.‡ Now, for the first time, he begins to use that aphorism so frequently repeated afterward in his ministry, and that has since become the motto of the Christian life: "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me."§ He reminds them that he has been called Beelzebub, and that they are not to expect to travel a road more royal than their king.‖ He declares to them that they can not be his disciples unless they love him for his own sake, and are willing to follow him in evil as well as good report, and to confess before others their love and allegiance.¶ He admonishes them candidly of coming persecution. They will be summoned before councils; will be scourged; must leave old friends and sunder old friendships; must brave a universal hate. They must be content to live as exiles, fleeing from city to city without a home; must hold even their life loosely.** But they are not to fear. They are marching, indeed, into a fearful battle, but they are assured of certain victory. That assurance rests on the invincible decree of God. He who has numbered even the hairs of their head,

* Matt. xv., 12. † Matt. x., 34–37; Luke xii., 51–53.
‡ Luke xi., 49–51. § Matt. x., 38. ‖ Matt. x., 24, 25.
¶ Matt. x., 32–34; Luke xii., 8–10. ** Matt. x., 17, 18, 22, 23, 39.

and who suffers not even the worthless sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed, will suffer no real evil to befall his children.* They are few and feeble; but it is God's good pleasure to give to them the kingdom.† The Pharisees will rage fiercely at them; but God will root up these proud Pharisees.‡ Poverty will be the disciples' portion; but they have a treasure in the heavens that fails not.§ Now the night is coming. The Lord is going for his bride. Slowly will the watches pass away while he seems long to delay. But he will come again. Blessed then will be those servants whom he shall find waiting and watching; but woe to those who, forgetful or heedless of the promise of his coming, begin to beat the men-servants and the maid-servants, and to eat, and to drink, and to be drunken.‖

With such prophecies he prepares them for the coming storm, while with such promises he strengthens their spirits to meet it with undaunted courage.

A marked change also characterizes Christ's public instructions. Hitherto it has consisted of the simple enunciation of the message, "The kingdom of God is at hand."¶ He has made little attempt to portray its characteristics. He has rarely indicated himself as its founder. To the popular apprehension, he has been content to be simply a prophet of its advent.** He has taken up the threads of John the Baptist's ministry that he may join them to his own. His Gospel has been almost an echo of his forerunner's.†† The Sermon on the Mount, as we have interpreted it, seems to be an exception to this statement. But that sermon was delivered specifically to his disciples, though in the presence of the multitude; and its meaning, interpreted as it is by the subsequent history of the development of Christianity, is much clearer to us than it could have been to the ancient Jews.

But from this time forth Jesus began to be more explicit;

* Matt. x., 29, 30. † Luke xii., 32. ‡ Matt. xv., 13.
§ Luke xii., 33, 34. ‖ Luke xii., 35–38. ¶ Matt. iv., 17; Mark i., 14, 15.
** Matt. xvi., 14. †† Compare Matt. iii., 2, with iv., 17.

to show that his kingdom was not of this world; that it gathered its subjects from all nationalities; that its only weapon was God's truth; that its glory was a glory of moral worth; that he was himself its founder. And though he did not yet foretell the overthrow of the ancient theocracy and the establishment of the Christian commonwealth in its place—the destruction of that Jerusalem which was the pride and hope of the Jews, that a new Jerusalem descended out of heaven from God might become the hope of all nations—he more and more distinctly declared that her gates were thenceforth open to the Gentiles, and that the Israel of God included all those who had faith in his name and acknowledged allegiance to his sway.

These truths, the orthodoxy of the nineteenth century, were the heresy of heresies in the first. Simple as they seem to our apprehension, they were incredible to the Jews. The people were prepared to welcome with joy Christ's declaration, "The kingdom of God is at hand;" were even ready to acknowledge him their king; but they were not ready to give up their cherished hope of a national restoration, and welcome in its place a shadowy vision of an unsubstantial kingdom, without territory, prince, or apparent power. Already Jesus had tried the people at Nazareth. He had preached to them that the kingdom of God was at hand, and all had borne witness to the graciousness of his words. He had told them that the Gentile should participate in it with the Jew, and had narrowly escaped their anger with his life. A second preaching at the same place had met with no better reception.*

If he had plainly declared these revolutionary principles, he could have gained for them no hearing. If he would introduce the truth at all, it must be in disguise. It was necessary that, seeing, they should see, and *not* perceive; and hearing, they should hear, and *not* understand.† Now, then, for the first time, he began to employ parables. These he

* Luke iv., 16–30; Mark vi., 1–6. † Matt. xiii., 14; Mark iv., 12.

used, not, as a popular orator employs tropes and figures, to elucidate his meaning,* but to veil it. Thus he secured a hearing for truths to which otherwise they would have refused to listen. Thousands have read Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," but dimly recognizing its full meaning, who would contemptuously cast aside his sermons. The parable of the Prodigal Son has enchained myriads who have never read the seventh and eighth chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Of these parables, a number have been collected by Matthew. They appear to have been delivered at about the same time, on the shore of Lake Tiberias. They afford, in the language of symbolism, an explanation of the true kingdom of God. Nature and life are added to the discipleship, become preachers, and have their before unknown tongue interpreted.†

This kingdom is not to be imposed upon unwilling subjects. It is a monarchy in that one king sits upon the throne; it is a republic in that every citizen enters only by his own free choice. Even the Mosaic commonwealth was established by the free suffrages of the people. This new kingdom is to be a free growth from their hearts. Its king is, therefore, like a sower sowing seed. His power depends

* This common explanation is quite inconsistent with Christ's own distinct declaration. These things are done in parables, *that* (Greek, *ινα*), seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear, and not understand (Mark iv., 12). That he should have veiled his teachings in a mystic form, as a punishment for the people's rejection of the truth, neither consorts with his history, his mission, nor his character. At this time the people had not rejected his teaching; they received it with applause. Had it been otherwise, still he himself declared that he came not to judge the world, but that the world through him might be saved (John iii., 17); and while certainly a teacher might refuse farther instruction to a willful people—might decline to cast his pearls before swine—it is inconceivable that he should go through the form of teaching only to mislead them. It is the nature of the parable to introduce truth to hearts reluctant to receive it, and for this purpose Jesus employed it. For a full discussion of the true character and object of the parable, see Smith's Bible Dict., art. Parable; Trench on Parables, Introd.; and Alford on Matt. xiii., 3.

† For some account of the references in these parables to natural objects in the immediate vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, see ante, chap. xii., p. 154.

on the heart, which acknowledges or refuses allegiance to him. Between the rocky-hearted Pharisee, who hears the truth with stony indifference, and the penitent publican, who receives it with joy, and treasures it in his heart, and waters it with his tears till it brings forth fruit in his life, there is as much difference as between the trodden path and the prepared soil; and between these extremes are various classes, each of which has its appropriate type in nature. What the kingdom of God is worth, therefore, to any man, depends upon what reception he accords it.*

Soils that are fertile in fruit are equally fertile for weeds. Where truth grows richest, heresies grow rankest. The darnel, so like the wheat in its childhood that the experienced eye not easily discerns the difference, makes manifest its character as it matures, and produces death in the unfortunate victim who mistakes it for the wheat, in which sometimes a malicious foe intermixes it. There are two kingdoms and two sowers, a good and an evil. The devil has his ministers as well as Christ, and his disciples, busiest of the two, work night as well as day; but "error is dangerless while truth is left free to combat it." If the Church attempt—as in the Middle Ages, despite Christ's caution, it did—to uproot by violence the heresy, to provide civil penalties for religious opinions, it will be sure to destroy more wheat than darnel, as we now know it did. Let her leave the deadly sower alone. The harvest shall make manifest the difference, and each shall go to his own place.†

This kingdom will not immediately appear; it is not built —it grows; and growths are slow. As summer comes, when soft winds summon from the earth the myriad hosts of fruits and flowers, with no flying banners, and no sound of trumpet or of drum, so will this kingdom of God grow up while the world goes on its accustomed way, eating, drinking, sleeping, unconscious of its presence and its power.‡

* Matt. xiii., 3–8, 18–23; Mark iv., 3–11, 14–20; Luke viii., 4–8, 11–15.
† Matt. xiii., 24–30, 36–43. ‡ Mark iv., 26–32.

Its beginnings seem contemptible. This son of the carpenter and his twelve peasant companions afford apparently but poor prospect of revolutionizing the world. It is but a little army for so large a campaign; but in God's hands the largest growths spring continually from the least sowings, as the mustard-tree, one of the largest among the garden herbs, comes from one of the smallest seeds.*

This growth proceeds by a process of permeation. Christianity, symbolized by the leaven, which was to the ancient housekeeper what yeast is to her successor, throws the entire community into ferment, and finally permeates it only by a continuous agitation.† The kingdom of Peace is established, as Jesus has already said, only by a sword.‡

This kingdom is beyond all value. Free, it is yet costly. No one can be naturalized in the new theocracy who does not heartily forswear allegiance to the old world. He must count the cost, and be willing to sell all that he has to secure this treasure, this "pearl of great price."§ For, though now its worth does not appear, and though in one net both good and bad seem to be inclosed, the end is not yet; and when it comes it will then appear that this kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and that he who has not achieved an entrance into it is indeed and forever a cast-away.‖

Thus, though in symbols, Jesus more and more indicates the fundamental principles of his kingdom—a kingdom of truth, of gradual growth, whose territory is the whole world, whose good grain is for a time inextricably intermixed with evil—a kingdom which promises to its adherents tribulation, to all communities agitation, and to the world no peace till the day of final judgment. In all these parables Jesus is himself, though still in symbol, the central figure — the farmer sowing the seed, the husbandman in whose field the enemy sows the tares, the man who sows the mustard seed, the housewife who hides the leaven in three measures of meal,

* Matt. xiii., 31–32. † Matt. xiii., 33. ‡ Matt. x., 34.
§ Matt. xiii., 44–46. ‖ Matt. xiii., 47–50.

the treasure and the pearl for which one may well sell all he hath, and the judge who sends his holy angels to "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."*

These truths, thus declared, are nevertheless but little apprehended. The people, enchanted by the story, give little heed to the moral it contains. Only a few of his more immediate followers come even to ask him for an explanation. That he does not purpose to leave his hearers in darkness is made evident by the fact that this request is never preferred in vain.† On the whole, it may be safely asserted that his popularity still increases. His fame spreads in ever-widening circles; it reaches even the ears of John the Baptist.

To the singular story of his life and death we must for a moment turn.

* See Gladstone's Ecce Homo. † Matt. xiii., 10, 18, 36, 37.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PRISONER AT MACHÆRUS.*

EAST of the Dead Sea, in the wild and desolate region—still inaccessible and unknown—which borders it, there stood, at the time of which we write, the fortified city of Machærus. It was, indeed, a fortification rather than a city; for its impregnable position and its elaborate military works alone gave it its importance. Built on a steep hill of rock, surrounded on all sides by deep valleys, or rather mountain gorges, Nature had provided it with ramparts that made it comparatively secure against the battering-rams which constituted the chief enginery of war of the first century. Art had increased the defensive capacities of this Jewish Gibraltar. Herod the Great had made it one of the chief military posts of the Holy Land. Huge walls of stone surrounded this inaccessible city, which scarcely seemed to need their protection. The apex of the hill was crowned with a military fort of great strength, from whose top one looked down the precipitous sides of the mountain on which it was built into a seemingly bottomless abyss below.† The surrounding country, barren of vegetation, could afford but little forage to any besieging force; while great stores of provisions, accumulated here for future need, protected the fortress against a siege almost as effectually as nature and art had protected it against direct assault.

* Matt. xi., 1–15; xiv., 1–12; Mark vi., 14–29; Luke iii., 19–20; vii., 18–30; ix., 7–9.

† "It is, as it were, ditched about with such valleys on all sides, and to such a depth that the eye can not reach their bottoms."—Josephus, Wars of the Jews, vii., 6, § 1, 2, which see for a full description of Machærus.

Here John the Baptist was confined a prisoner at large. He had, that is, the liberties of the city. At least his disciples had free access to him, and through them he was even permitted to hold communication with friends outside.* From the crest of the hill he could look down into the valley of the Dead Sea. A little to the north and west was his old preaching-place, the ford of the Jordan; and in sight of his impatient eyes was the peak of Pisgah, where Moses, the first prophet, had lain down to die in sight of the land which he had promised to Israel, but which he might not enter with them, and close to which this last of the prophets was also to lay down his life on the borders of that kingdom of God which he had proclaimed as at hand, but which his followers were to enter without him.

The story of the Baptist's imprisonment and death constitutes a singular and somewhat romantic episode, and affords a striking illustration of the character of the age.

Among the ten wives that constituted the harem of the voluptuous Herod, misnamed the Great, were two of the name of Mariamne. They represented rival dynasties. Mariamne the First, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus the high-priest, had by her marriage strengthened the position of the ambitious parvenu, who made the necks of better men than himself the steps by which he mounted to his throne. Mariamne the Second, granddaughter of Boethus, high-priest and leader of a rival faction, brought with her marriage their support also to the crafty politician who was alternately Sadducee or Pharisee, Roman or Jew, Maccabean or Boethusian, as it suited his own purposes to be. Mariamne the First was the favorite of his household. He loved her as ardently as a nature so ignoble is capable of loving any one other than himself, and his sensual attachment was for a time fired rather than cooled by the ill-concealed contempt which the haughty Maccabean felt for her royal master. To be the wife of such a man is surely not an enviable position; but

* Matt. xi., 2–4; Luke vii., 18, 19, 22.

it is part of the wretchedness of royalty that its misery is coveted, not condoled with; and Mariamne, the wretched favorite of the royal despot, was envied, watched, conspired against by her husband's sister and mother; the suspicions of the ever-jealous king were aroused; her own haughty demeanor aided the designs of her foes; she strengthened suspicions which she might easily have allayed; she was charged with a conspiracy to poison her husband; confessions of complicity were forced from the unwilling lips of some of her servants by torture, from others obtained by bribes, while yet others, refusing to belie their mistress, paid the penalty of their fruitless fidelity by their lives; and the passionate attachment of the lecherous tyrant turning to a jealousy as passionate, the wife was condemned to the death which she was believed to have prepared for her husband. She was hardly in her grave, however, before he repented him of the crime which had consigned her there, and endeavored to compensate therefor by transferring to her granddaughter the attachment he had formerly felt for his unhappy wife. Thus Herodias, borrowing her grandfather's name, became his favorite. She was every way worthy the affection of such a man, a genuine Herod, ambitious, designing, heartless, intriguing, careless of every thing but her own preferment, stopped by no scruple in securing it.

By the second Mariamne, the Boethusian queen, Herod had a single son, Philip, heir-apparent to his throne; for it was no secret that he was designed by his grandfather to succeed his elder brother Antipater, son of Herod by yet another wife; and the discerning eye of Herodias perceived that there was little prospect that Antipater would retain the affections of his father. Philip, too, was likely to make a manageable husband, as in truth he did; so she gladly accepted the proffer of marriage which her grandfather arranged between the son of one Mariamne and the granddaughter of the other, silenced whatever scruples she might have felt against marrying her own uncle, and, as the wife of

Herod Philip, already considered herself assured of becoming the queen of the Holy Land.

The ambition of the shrewdest is, however, amazingly blind; and Herodias, keen calculator as she was, had made no allowance for her grandfather's capricious temper. So, though it ought not to have surprised her, it doubtless did, when the conspiracies for the succession, that made the closing years of King Herod's life intolerably wretched, culminated in a successful charge of attempted assassination against the second Mariamne, and Herod, with far less compunction than he felt in the execution of his first wife, pronounced the divorce of the second, and, altering his will, disinherited her son Philip, and divided the kingdom between Antipas, Archelaus, and a second Philip. He died before he had time or opportunity for a new caprice; his will was confirmed by the Roman court, and so Antipas became tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Herodias, despite all her scheming, found herself no queen, but simply the wife of a humble citizen.

Philip was no true Herod, as doubtless his wife often told him. He had no fancy for intrigue, and though he might have taken not unwillingly a throne, he would not purchase it by crime. Of unambitious temper, he accepted quietly the position which was assigned him, and, leaving Palestine altogether, where indeed it was not safe for him to remain, lest he should fall a victim to the suspicion of his royal brothers, he removed to Rome. All this was very unsatisfactory to Herodias; and since she was unable to intrigue through her husband, she began to contrive how she might do so despite him. Queen she would be, cost what it might; and since she could not get a crown for her husband, she began to contrive how she might obtain a husband who was crowned. The case, however, really seemed difficult. Though under both Jewish and Roman law a husband might on very slight pretext divorce his wife, the wife could not obtain a separation from her husband; for in that age, with few exceptions, a woman had no rights which a man was bound to respect.

Herodias, too, already had a daughter by Philip who was growing up to maturity. And the three sons of Herod the Great, who ruled the various districts into which the Holy Land was now divided, were already married.

To the wit of such a woman as Herodias, nothing, however, is impossible, and neither her conscience, her self-respect, nor her regard for the opinion of others was such as to make her halt for trifles. There is reason to suppose that she possessed considerable beauty of person, as certainly her daughter did after her, and she understood how to employ it in the promotion of her ambition. Chance brought Antipas to Rome. Herodias employed all the charms of her person, and all the power of her wit and will, to captivate him; succeeded; and when he returned from his mission to his native land, he carried back with him his brother Philip's wife and her daughter Salome. Philip bore it apparently very philosophically, quite willing, perhaps, to be rid of such a wife, and wondering at the temerity of a man who dared assume to marry her. She, on her part, disdained to share her throne with another; and so effectually had she played her part, that Antipas had solemnly promised, and it was a part of the marriage contract, that he would divorce his own wife, and send her back disgraced to her home.

Nothing travels so quick as scandal. The story of the nation's disgrace—for the nation shared the disgrace with their king—reached Galilee before the guilty pair; and when they arrived at the royal palace at Tiberias, the indignant wife, an Arabian princess, whose hot blood could ill brook such an insult, had flown back to her father's home; her father, Aretas, king of Petra, was beating throughout his kingdom the alarm of war; his army was gathering to avenge his daughter's wrong; all Galilee and Perea, ashamed of their national cause, were yet compelled to vindicate it, and with hanging heads were gathering to defend the king they despised from the chastisement he merited. That this illicit love might run an untroubled course, and that this infamous woman's infa-

mous ambition might be satisfied, mothers were parting from their sons, wives were giving the last embrace to their husbands, and hearts of true love, from Mount Lebanon to the castle of Machærus, were weeping prophetic tears of heart-breaking sorrow

The heart of the prophet was aroused. Untrained in that school of theology which teaches that it is wrong to preach politics, John the Baptist denounced the treacherous king, his royal paramour, and the unholy war to which he summoned the nation. It is easy to conceive what power the words of this stern old prophet possessed as he denounced the iniquities of these successors of Ahab and Jezebel; forbade, in the name of God, the people from answering the summons of the tetrarch; and reminded them how always in their history they had been whelmed in irretrievable disaster and defeat when they had undertaken to battle—though in better causes than this—without God for their leader. The people were discontented; they were ripe for insurrection. Antipas dared not march against his foe, and leave this discontent to foment behind him; so one day a cohort of soldiers were added to the Baptist's audience, and he was escorted to the castle of Machærus, there to wait in silence till the present crisis should be passed.

The crisis proved more serious than Herod had expected. His army, ashamed alike of their leader and their cause, were routed by the arms of the Arabian king, whose wrong every soldier felt as his own, and nothing saved Herod from paying, in speedy dethronement, for his crimes but the interference of Rome. A message from the mistress of the world commanded Aretas to desist. To resist this edict would be vain; and sullenly, and but half avenged, Aretas withdrew again to his own boundaries.

While these events were transpiring, John remained a lonely prisoner in the fortress of Machærus. Nothing is so hard to the man of active temperament as enforced inaction. Patiently to wait is ever to such a one a harder trial of

faith than energetically to do or heroically to suffer. Elijah, who hesitated not to face single-handed, in the name of Jehovah, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, sustained though they were by the whole power of the corrupt court, when his work was done and he fled to the solitudes of the southern wilderness, felt his faith give way, and cried out for leave to die.* So John the Baptist, who had fearlessly preached the Gospel of repentance, who had inveighed alike against sins of priest, of people, and of king, but who had lived the unfettered life of a hermit in the woods ever since his majority, felt grievously the irksomeness of his confinement. He had seen the dove—emblem of the Spirit of God—descend upon the head of Jesus. He had pointed him out to his disciples as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. He had obtained—the prophet's privilege—a clearer vision than his contemporaries of the spirituality and universality of the kingdom of God which Christ was to establish; yet even he, probably, had little true conception of its founder as a suffering king. He expected, as did all his generation, and even the early Christian Church, that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.† He assured himself, perhaps, that his royal master, coming into his kingdom, would secure the instant release of his faithful servant.

But no release came. Herod still sat secure upon his throne, his crime unpunished, and his iniquitous partner triumphant. The Roman legions showed no sign of waning power. The infidel Sadducee was still high-priest, and profaned the Temple of God by his dishonoring presence. The proud Pharisee abated nothing of his haughty pretension. The King of the Jews, uncrowned and unaccepted, occupied himself in preaching to the poorer classes the kingdom which, if he were indeed the Messiah, he should establish, and in denouncing the Pharisaic party, which, if he were a lawgiver of Israel, he should destroy. The Baptist looked for the earth-

* 1 Kings xix., 5. † Luke xiv., 11.

quake or the whirlwind; he could not comprehend the still small voice. As the months rolled into a completed year, and showed no sign of the establishment of that kingdom which, with but a partial understanding of its nature, he had proclaimed as at hand, he grew impatient of the long delay. He could not doubt that the kingdom was near, but he began to wonder whether indeed his cousin were its founder; and at length, unable longer to bear the intolerable suspense, or to resist alone the skepticism of his disciples, he sent two of them to ask of Jesus whether he was in truth the long-expected heir of David's throne, or only a new prophet of its advent. He believed in Jesus; he doubted whether he were the Christ.*

Jesus was not yet, however, prepared to announce himself. The crucifixion was to be his coronation. His kingdom was to be one of love, not power, and the fruits of love are long in ripening. Moreover, in the kingdom of God there is no favoritism, there are no privy councilors. John the Baptist must rest his faith upon the evidences which were vouchsafed to the commonest subject. Jesus therefore added John's disciples for the hour to his own. They witnessed his works. In them they saw the promise of the ancient prophet fulfilled —"The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped"†—and at Jesus's command they carried back to their imprisoned teacher an account of those things which they had seen and heard. On this John must form his own judgment of Jesus's character and mission.‡ At the same time, Jesus guarded the people against misapprehending the character of John. He recalled to their mem-

* Calvin, quoted in Lange's Life of Christ, vol. iii., p. 100, note, supposes that John was not himself perplexed, but sent his disciples to Jesus to satisfy their doubts. So Chrystom and Stier, quoted in Alford on Matt. xi., 2. Ebrard, Olshausen, Neander, Lightfoot, and De Wette suppose John really perplexed by Jesus's course and his own continued imprisonment. Lange, Life of Christ, vol. iii., p. 101, notes a parallel in the experience of Moses (Exod. xvii., 4), Elijah (1 Kings xix., 10), Jeremiah (Lam. iii.), and even Christ himself (Matt. xxvii., 46).

† Isa. xxxv., 5.

‡ Matt. xi., 2–6; Luke vii., 19–23.

ory that scene by the banks of the Jordan when this more than prophet preached to the gathered people a kingdom of righteousness. They need not fear that he would ever prove false to his convictions. He was no reed to be shaken in the wind. However he might seem to waver, he was rooted in a faith from which nothing could move him. He was no king's courtier, to be bribed to silence by soft raiment. This man, that lived on locusts and wild honey, and clad himself in a coarse garment of camel's hair, would yield as little to the blandishments as to the threats of royalty. If they did but know it, he was the Elijah whose second coming the ancient prophets had foretold. Chief among all the sacred names of the old theocracy, he was yet second in his privileges to the least of those who were permitted to become citizens of the new one, as the least child is more than the highest servant.*

Meanwhile the release which John the Baptist so impatiently awaited was near at hand, but it came in a manner far different from what he had anticipated.

Herod was a Jew. He shared the superstitions of the Jews, and felt, despite himself, the influence of their religious faith and their sacred history. He remembered how many kings that sat more securely on their throne than did he had paid a bitter penalty for their maltreatment of the ancient prophets. The fate of Ahab,† and Jezebel,‡ and Jehoiakim,§ and Zedekiah‖ were all familiar to him. He seems, too, to have been more weak than wicked—wicked because weak. His conscience was not dead, nor his higher aspirations utterly quenched. The Baptist, prisoner though he was, became a sort of court preacher. The king sent for him often, and gladly listened to his stirring words—gladly, though with fear and with compunction. Whatever court blandishments could

* Matt. xi., 7–15; Luke vii., 24–28; compare Gal. iv., 1–7.

† 1 Kings xxii., 15–38. ‡ 2 Kings ix., 30–37.

§ Jer. xxii., 18, 19; 2 Kings xxiv., 1–4; Jer. xxvi., 21–24; xxxvi., 29. 30.

‖ Compare Jer. xxxviii., 5–6, with xxxix., 1–10.

do, was done, to swerve John from his uncompromising allegiance to the truth; and, if the old hero could have been made to keep silence concerning kingly wrong, the opportunity was rare for preferment, and, conscience might also whisper, for extended usefulness. But John's history attests how truly Jesus had interpreted his character. He was as unmoved by flattery as by threats. Unable to secure the prophet's countenance, Herodias was bent upon his death. The very weakness of the king, however, withstood her. He feared the people yet more than he feared his wife. His unholy marriage had already aroused a storm of indignation before which his heart had cowered in fear, and he dared not add to it by the murder of one whom all the people reckoned as a prophet; so he compromised by keeping him still a prisoner whom he neither dared to kill nor set at liberty.

The wily queen, not to be thus baffled, resorted to a stratagem.

It was Herod's birthday. The city of Machærus was all alive with festal preparations, for Herod had imported from Rome the heathen practice of celebrating with drunken orgies each mile-stone on his journey to the tomb. The still-impending war abated nothing of these festivities. The fortress was transformed into a palace; the martial sounds of war gave place for the hour to music and to dancing; the king drowned his cares and drugged his conscience in the wine-cup; and the feast, prolonged for many hours, had become a scene of wild hilarity ere the crafty queen added to its festivities the surprise she had prepared for her voluptuous husband.

In the Orient far more than with us, the dance is sensual and exciting. The loose robes but half conceal the person; the unconfined limbs alternate between a poetry of motion more graceful, and a freedom of motion more wild than is ever seen in America, except perhaps in the ballet, which we have borrowed from abroad. The dancer bears her instrument in her hand, and accompanies herself with her own

music. Her entertainment usually follows the banquet, and appeals, therefore, more strongly to the imagination of the guests, already flushed with wine. Only the utmost exigency suffers a reputable woman to enter such a scene of carousing as the Oriental feast affords. She will answer with her life rather than submit her unveiled face to the rude gaze of its debaucheries; and only the professional dancer, who sustains in the East a social position yet inferior to that which she occupies here, permits herself to prostitute her womanhood to the entertainment of such an assemblage.*

But Herodias knew well her husband's character. Delicacy of sentiment was not among his characteristics. She decked out her daughter in the habiliments of the dancing-girl. At the appointed moment, Salome, instructed by her mother, appeared at the door of the court, and completed the sensual pleasures of the feast by proffering for their enjoyment an Oriental dance. The enraptured king gloried in his step-daughter's shame. Like the Persian monarch who desired to display to his drunken courtiers the beauties of his wife, he was proud to have his court witness the voluptuous accomplishments of Salome. Joining in their wild applause as the girl finished her performance, he promised her for her reward whatever she should ask, though it were the half of his kingdom. She demanded the sanction of an oath that Herod, sober, might not retract the promise of Herod, drunk. Then, in her mother's name, she called for vengeance on the enemy who had openly denounced her sin and shame. "Now and here," cried she, "the head of my mother's defamer on a charger."

The time and the occasion were propitious. Could Herod have delayed, he might have saved himself the infamy of yielding to the demand; but these Roman courtiers cared nothing for a Jewish prophet. To those whose chiefest entertainment at the capitol of the world was the gladiatorial

* Esth. i., 10–12. See Smith's Bible Dict., art. Dance; Thomson's Land and Book, vol. ii., p. 345; Jahn's Archæology, § 97.

combat, an execution only lent additional grace to a birth-day banquet, and it needed more moral courage than this half-drunken king possessed to withstand the threatened reproaches of the damsel and her mother, and the inevitable raillery of the court. The command was given. The Roman executioner carried to the Baptist, dreaming of release, the summons to the block. Death opened to the captive the gates of Machærus, that it might usher him into the liberty of the kingdom of God. The Baptist's bloody head became Herod's birthday present to his wife, while the disciples of the martyred prophet obtained the poor privilege of giving to his beheaded trunk a decent burial.

The justice of God does not always long delay. Herod's fear of the prophet proved to be no idle superstition. Instigated by the ambition of his still dissatisfied wife, he went a few years later to Rome to obtain from Cæsar the title of king. In grasping at the shadow he lost the substance. Falling into disfavor, and driven an exile from the court, he dragged out the miserable remnant of his days with his yet more miserable wife, known only to be despised, all her well-planned wickedness frustrated by her own over-reaching ambition.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CRISIS.*

LET us now return from this seeming digression to the thread of our narrative; a digression only in appearance, since the Baptist's death affected the mission of Jesus no less than the Baptist's imprisonment had done. The latter Christ had accepted as the voice of God calling him to his personal ministry; in the former he seems to have recognized an indication that it was time for him to set apart his twelve disciples to their work. They had been instructed in the principles of their Master's kingdom. They had received the interpretation of his parables. For nearly a year they had accompanied him in his ministry, witnessed his miracles, and listened to his instructions. To the completion of their education it was necessary that they should attempt, under his guidance, to preach that Gospel, the proclamation of which, after his death, was to be the business of their lives. He sent them forth, therefore, upon such a mission, quite as much, perhaps, to try their powers as to secure the public proclamation of his Gospel. The Church which he had built he prepared to launch upon its trial-trip.

Their mission was accordingly very simple. They were merely to repeat the message of the Baptist, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."† The blood of the first martyr became thus the seed of the Church, and from the one silent head sprang up twelve speaking ones. They were to go in pairs,‡

* Matt. x.–xi., 1; xiv., 13–36; Mark vi., 7–13, 30–56; Luke ix., 1–6, 10–17; John vi.

† Compare Matt. x., 7, with Matt. iii., 1. ‡ Mark vi., 7.

"for they were to be accustomed to work in brotherly fellowship, and when difficulties arose, one was to have the counsel and aid of the other."* Like their Lord, they were to administer to body, mind, and soul. They were to cure diseases and cast out devils as well as preach the Gospel.† It is a singular and significant fact that Judas should have shared in this commission with his fellow-disciples. Longfellow, in his Golden Legend, has portrayed Lucifer in the garb of a priest serving at the confessional. There is truth as well as poetry in the picture. In the new theocracy as in the old, there are lying priests. The enemy in the garb of the husbandman sows the tares in broad daylight.

These disciples were limited in their mission. It was to last but a few weeks. It was confined to the towns and villages of Galilee. They were to preach to a people whose habits of thought they understood. It seems not even to have embraced the larger cities, where Christ himself personally ministered.‡ They were positively forbidden to include in their missionary field Samaritan or Gentile cities.§ They were not yet prepared to preach his Gospel to the heathen. They did not understand till a far later period that the true Israel of God are all they who fear him and work righteousness. If they had undertaken to preach out of the bounds of Judaism, they would have become involved in fruitless discussion, and would have made, at best, only converts to a reformed Judaism. They had no commission, as yet, to expound the principles of Christ's kingdom, which indeed they did not themselves understand. They were merely to provoke the public mind to an expectancy of its coming.

As prophets of this new theocracy, they were subject to the laws, and were to claim the privileges of the ancient or-

* Schenckel's Character of Jesus, vol. i., p. 187.

† Luke ix., 1, 2; Matt. x., 8.

‡ Luke ix., 6: "And they departed and went through the *towns*" (Greek *κώμας*). Matt. xi., 1: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, that *he* departed thence to teach and to preach in their *cities*" (Greek *πόλεσιν*).

§ Matt. x., 5.

der whose successors they were. The characteristic features of that order we have already described.* Like them, their ministry was to be an itinerant one. They were provided with no settled compensation. They were not to make barter of their Gospel, but to dispense it as a free gift.† At the same time, they were worthy of their support. They were to claim the hospitalities of the people. They were to be evidently dependent thereon. In this respect, too, they resembled their predecessors. In their girdle they were to carry no money. Over the shoulder they were not to sling the Oriental traveler's inseparable companion, the traveling bag. They were not even to carry a change of raiment.‡ The God who fed the wandering prophet in the wilderness§ would provide for them. Whatever house received them received in their benediction that of their Master; whoever rejected them rejected him, and were denied participation in the Messiah's kingdom. The Pharisees, when they entered Judea from a Gentile country, shook off the dust of their feet, that heathen earth might not pollute the Holy Land. The disciples were similarly to cast off from their feet the very dust of those towns which, by refusing to receive the good news of the kingdom, voluntarily enrolled themselves among the heathen nations.‖

Too much has sometimes been deduced from this first commission of the twelve. It has been concluded that the ministry should always be an itinerant ministry; that it should be uncompensated; that the prophet of God, now as of old, should take neither money in his purse nor food in his bag, but should rely on the free hospitalities of the people and the special provisions of God for his support. The premiss is too narrow to support so broad a deduction. Christ's commission was to the twelve, not to all the preachers of the Gospel—for this mission, not for all time. His object, in part, was to try what faith there might be in Israel. It was cus-

* See *ante*, chap. vi., p. 81–84. † Matt. x., 8. ‡ Matt. x., 9–11.
§ 1 Kings xix., 4–8. ‖ Matt. x., 12–15.

tomary for the people to extend the rites of hospitality to religious teachers. By relying upon that hospitality, Jesus tested the readiness of the people to receive his Gospel. He inaugurated no innovation; he simply availed himself of the social customs of his age. He certainly did not aim to be the founder of an order of mendicant friars, nor to establish rules for a body of circuit preachers. This is evident from his usual custom in his ordinary ministry. The infant Church, under his leadership, maintained a treasury and appointed a treasurer.* The disciples customarily carried provisions on their journeys.† So universal was this usage, that their neglect so to do on one such occasion seemed to them to be worthy of self-condemnation;‡ and Jesus himself declared distinctly that the direction not to do so at this time was exceptional, and constituted no law for the apostles' later ministry.§

This mission of the twelve, brief as it was, had the effect to extend still farther the ever-widening reputation of Jesus. Vague rumors of this new prophet reached the ears of the apostate king. An uneasy conscience awakened in him superstitious fears. He imagined that John had risen from his tomb to haunt his kingdom.‖ A new danger, therefore, began to threaten Christ, who, ever ready to meet death, was yet not ready to die before his time had come. Upon the return of his disciples, he accordingly took his little boat, and sought his customary retreat on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. This was partly to escape the inquisition of Herod;¶ it was yet more to escape the inquisition of the people, for the Passover was drawing nigh. All Galilee was beginning to gather in its towns and villages preparatory to the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The highways were filled with caravans. Capernaum was crowded with gathering pilgrims. Christ and his twelve friends, meeting after their

* John xii., 6; xiii., 29.
† Matt. xiv., 17; xv., 34.
§ Matt. xvi., 7.
§ Luke xxii., 35, 36.
‖ Matt. xiv., 1, 2; Mark vi., 14.
¶ Matt., xiv.. 13

mission in this, his adopted city, had neither time nor opportunity for quiet converse. Even their meal-hours were not their own.*

The River Jordan, entering the Sea of Galilee on the north, divided the ancient city of Bethsaida into two sections—that of Galilee and that of Gaulonitis. The former, on the western shore, was a mere fisherman's hamlet; the latter, Herod Philip, tetrarch of Gaulonitis, had built, naming it Julias, in honor of the daughter of his patron, the Roman emperor. But in the bestowal of names the common people are more potent than kings, and, despite the royal christening, this half village, half city, still retained the homely designation which its lowly origin had given it: it was still the "House of Fish."† The plain on which this city stood extended to the Jaulan range, which borders the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee, and cast their shadows on the palace of Herod Philip. Landing at the farther extremity of this plain of Butaiha, near the northeastern corner of the lake, Jesus and his twelve friends found among these mountains a brief respite from the labors of that ministry to which they had consecrated their lives.‡

* Mark vi., 30, 31. † Such is the meaning of the word Bethsaida.

‡ See Map of the Sea of Galilee, page 155, and note there. The topography of this region is undoubtedly involved in great obscurity, and affords more than one problem on which the ablest geographers differ. Among these problems, none, perhaps, is more perplexing than that concerning the site or sites of Bethsaida. John describes it as in Galilee (John xii., 21); Josephus, as in Gaulonitis. Luke tells us that Jesus fed the multitude in a "desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida" (Luke ix., 10). Mark tells us that, after the feeding, "he constrained his disciples to get into the ship and go to the other side before unto Bethsaida" (Mark vi., 45). It has been conjectured, therefore, that there were two Bethsaidas—one in the land of Gennesaret, on the western coast, the other in the plain of Butaiha, on the northeastern shore (so Smith's Bible Dict., art. Bethsaida; Trench on the Miracles, p. 223). This conjecture, however, originated by Reland avowedly for the purpose of harmonizing the Gospel, has absolutely no historical confirmation; and Dr. Thomson has shown (Land and Book, vol. ii., p. 31) that the hypothesis is not necessary. The River Jordan separated the districts of Galilee and Gaulonitis; separated, too, the fisherman's village in the one district from the king's city in the other, which were, nevertheless, one town, and bore, with the common people, the

This rest was but brief.

Under the mild skies and in the warm climate of the Holy Land, the benighted traveler feels no alarm, but lies down to quiet sleep, the grass his couch, the blue skies above him his roof. The tropical fruits furnish him with food, and the hospitality of the people, keeping pace with the generosity of Nature, supplies the place which is filled in our colder climate and more mercenary civilization by hotels. The people of Capernaum had already learned the habits of their fellow-townsman, and they, who a year before had sent Peter to call back the retreating Savior, now followed him on foot to his mountain retreat. From Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, as well as from smaller villages and private houses, there poured an increasing crowd; some, drawn by the rumor of his beneficent compassion, bringing their sick to the Great Physician; some, having their hearts strangely stirred by the hope of the approaching millennial day of a restored Judaism, coming to hear from the lips of the Great Prophet himself the portrayal of that kingdom which they had heard his disciples announce as close at hand; some, drawn by sympathy and curiosity, and following the crowd, as men still do, they scarce knew why. Thus, as the morning passed away, Christ from his mountain retreat—a retreat no longer—looked down upon a congregation of several thousand gathering in the plain of Butaiha.*

same name; and the disciples, sailing from the foot of the Jaulan "toward Capernaum," as John says they did, would pass near Bethsaida, especially if in the darkness of the night they kept near the shore, and might, therefore, well be described by Mark as going "unto Bethsaida," whither the Lord would follow them on foot. For a fuller discussion of this subject, the reader is referred to Thomson's Land and Book, vol. ii., p. 29, and Andrews's Life of our Lord, p. 212. See also, for the other view, Ellicott's Life of Christ, p. 194. note.

* Such, at least, seems to be the meaning of the Evangelist John (John vi., 3, 4). Mark, on the other hand, seems to indicate that Jesus found this congregation already on the shore when he landed (Mark vi., 33, 34). The discrepancy is not material. It may be that the people "outwent" Jesus, and yet that they were not present at his landing, and that he did not descend at first to meet them.

Their claims the compassionate Prince of Israel could not resist. Foregoing for the time the quiet and the converse which he and his Church alike required, he descended from the mountain to the plain, and resumed the ministrations of his love. Their sick he healed;* their souls' longing for the good news of the coming kingdom of God he satisfied;† and, enchained alike by the eloquence of his words and the wonders of his works, the people took no note of time, until the western rays of the setting sun reminded them that night was coming on;‡ and the clamor of hungry children, and the foresight of the more thoughtful, brought to mind the hour of the evening meal, the dinner of the Jewish people.

The disciples' little stock of provisions—five thin barley crackers, barely adequate for as many persons, and two little fishes, such as served the purpose of a relish to the otherwise vegetable diet of the Galilean peasant§—were not, in truth, sufficient for their own meal. Their treasury was not adequate to provide for such a number, even if a market had been at hand in which to buy. The people, prepared for neither journey nor encampment, were almost utterly without provisions. But among them were doubtless some whose hospitality the disciples in their tour had proved. Jesus was ready to demonstrate to his followers that it was not without warrant he had bid them provide no store for their journey, but trust for food to Him who fed the sparrows and clothed the lilies.

He directed the concourse, who had hitherto gathered about him in enthusiastic disorder, to be seated in groups upon the ground. The women and children stood upon the outskirts. The disciples were thus able to number the people with some accuracy. There were five thousand men, besides women and children.‖

It was spring. The grass was fresh and green, the air was

* Matt. xiv., 34-36. † Mark vi., 34. ‡ Matt. xiv., 15; Mark vi., 35.
§ John vi., 9. Greek ὀψάρια. See Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, art. Opsonium. ‖ John vi., 10.

fragrant with flowers, the lemon and the orange-tree were just exchanging their blossoms for early fruit, the setting sun was casting over the Jordan range a golden glow, in the distance the farmers were returning from their toil to the city of Bethsaida, on the placid lake fishermen were drawing up their nets, and their white-winged fleets were hastening to their homes, the birds were nestling down in the tree-tops, and the sacred stillness of twilight was gathering over the scene, as Jesus, taking these five little barley-cakes in his hands, brake them, and gave thanks to God for the provision which his faith perceived in store for the waiting people. More wonderful than the twenty like loaves with which Elisha fed one hundred men in Gilgal,* or the widow's cruise and barrel which, through a long famine, failed not,† this little stock was not exhausted until all were satisfied. And that he might forever set at rest such doubts of the verity of this miracle as a later skepticism has invented, such, for example, as that the people, entranced by Christ's teaching, were indifferent to the claims of hunger, and, spiritually fed, suffered the evening meal to pass unnoticed, Jesus instructed his disciples to borrow from among the people their traveling baskets, the common accompaniment of the Jewish pilgrim, and gather up the fragments that remained. They gathered enough to fill twelve of these baskets.‡

Our Christian faith, instructed not less by the subsequent history of Christianity than by the life and teachings of Jesus, sees in this miracle a parable, as in all the works of Jesus it recognizes an illustration of his life of love. "It is," says an eloquent French writer,§ "the brilliant inauguration of that fruitful miracle of Christian charity which has ever since gone on multiplying bread to the hungry. The heart of man once touched, like the rock in the desert touched by

* 2 Kings iv., 42–44. † 1 Kings xvii., 16.

‡ Compare, for full account of this miracle, Matt. xiv., 13–21; Mark vi., 30–44; Luke ix., 10–17; John vi., 1–14.

§ Pressensé, Life of Christ, p. 383.

the rod of Moses, has gone on pouring over thirsty crowds the inexhaustible stream of generosity."

But more than that—in this one act of love we perceive symbolized that miraculous multiplying of sacred influences which, from one brief life of three active years, and one body pierced and broken on the tree, feeds innumerable thousands who sit, grateful recipients of the Bread of Life, beneath the shadow of the Great Rock.

So we read this act; so, however, did not the Jews.

For it was not only a part of their expectation that Jesus, restoring the ancient theocracy, would resuscitate the prophetic order and the miracles which constituted one of the signs of their divine commander, but in part that he would repeat the miracle of the ancient manna. Drought and famine should then be known no more. The prophecy of Isaiah,* "My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry," should be literally fulfilled. Israel should be gathered together. The young men should feed on bread, the old men on honey, the children on oil. Every palate should be pleased, every appetite satisfied, and the prolific profusion of the Garden of Eden should repeat itself in the land of the Messiah.† These prophecies of their scribes, with which constant repetition in the synagogue had rendered the common people familiar, seemed to them about to be fulfilled. This provision for the body was more significant than all that which Christ had provided for the soul. Their enthusiasm overcoming all bounds, the people prepared forthwith to crown this prince, and, taking him in their arms, bear him at the head of a triumphal procession into the Holy City, in the midst of the Passover feast, to overturn by a miracle the power of Rome, and inaugurate the new kingdom of God. The disciples, still but little comprehending the nature of that kingdom, were but too ready to farther the plan and fan the wild enthusiasm. Christ instantly perceived, and as instantly frustrated

* Isaiah lxv., 13.

† See authorities quoted in Milman's History of Christianity, p. 103.

"IT IS I."

their purpose. He commanded his reluctant disciples to take to their boat, and set these people the example of dispersing. He overcame their unwillingness to leave him in these mountain solitudes alone by the promise to join them at the mouth of the Jordan, just below Bethsaida. Then, bidding the people to depart, he withdrew himself for an hour of repose and of communion with his God in the mountain solitudes of the Jaulan.*

The disciples had not gone far, and darkness had just gathered about them, when one of those sudden gusts which the Lebanon range sends so frequently down the valley of the Jordan struck the lake, and, despite the utmost efforts of the oarsmen, drove their boat far out to sea.† Instead of reaching Bethsaida, as they should have done, in an hour or two, midnight found them rowing against a head wind and over boisterous waves to make good their appointment with their Lord. When even the gray morning broke‡ their boat was still out upon the lake, advanced, with all their toil, less than three miles,§ and their Lord still waiting, as they supposed, for their return. Thus laboring to come back to him, in the twilight of the morning, when all things seem strangely indistinct, the disciples, already exhausted with their day of labor and their night of watching, see a spirit walking calmly upon the waves on which it required all their seamanship to keep their little craft alive. It makes as though it would pass by them. They cry out with terror at the seeming apparition; but, though they recognize not the form, they know at once the voice of the Master. A word from him suffices to reassure them. Peter, his fear changed to temerity, craves permission to perform the miracle of the Lord; but his temerity, changing as quickly back to fear, is saved from a watery grave only by his Master's hand; and Jesus, received into

* Such we understand to be the meaning of Mark vi., 45. See p. 306, note ‡, supra.

† Matt. xiv., 24.

‡ Mark vi., 48. The fourth watch was from three to six A.M.

§ John vi., 19. Twenty-five or thirty furlongs, *i. e.* stadia. Ten stadia are equivalent to a modern geographical mile.

the boat which he had come out to meet, the storm forthwith abates, and a favorable breeze, springing up, brings them speedily to shore.*

If we have read aright this story of Jesus's walk upon the midnight sea, it is a significant fact—is it not a symbolic one as well?—that he went forth in the midst of the storm not merely "swift walking on the wave;" not merely to show his might by triumphing over Nature; not merely to manifest "the voice of Christ, mightier in its gentleness than all the thunders of the storm;"† not merely to bring succor to disciples storm-tossed and in trouble, but to meet those who were toiling against wind and wave to come to him. The storm-tossed soul is assured of the presence of his Lord only when, despite every obstacle, he is steering toward his Savior.

The succeeding morning was a holy day—perhaps the Sabbath. All Capernaum was astir with excitement. The people, returning, some in boats and some on foot, had brought back the story of the miracle. And here a new marvel met them. The Jesus whom they had left in the Jaulan had preceded them. Vague rumors of his walking on the wave and through the storm filled the air. As the hour of service drew on, the synagogue was filled with an impatient audience, drawn hither in the hope to witness new and greater wonders, or to see at least repeated the miracle of which some had only heard from their more fortunate or more ardent neighbors. Thus an expectant multitude listened with breathless attention to Christ's words when at length the morning prayers were concluded, and he arose to speak.

But they were doomed to disappointment. They came for a miracle; they received instruction. They came to hear of the glories of the approaching kingdom; they heard the first

* "Upon their doing so [*i. e.*, taking Jesus into the boat], the ship, in a comparatively short time—or perhaps immediately by miracle, but I prefer the other—was at the land to which they had been going, viz., by the storm ceasing and the ship making smooth way."—Alford on John vi., 21.

† Pressensé's Life of Christ, p. 384.

clear prophecies of the cross. They wanted to crown Jesus; he told them of his approaching crucifixion.

Ye have come, he said in substance, for a miracle, not for the Messiah. But there is a more imperative hunger than that of the body, a higher food than that of barley-loaves and fishes. Labor for that. Rather in faith receive it; for that higher food for the soul's need the Son of God supplies. It is, indeed, the very fruit of the tree of life, and hath immortality concealed in it. The manna which Moses gave to Israel in the wilderness was but the shadow of better things to come. The bones of those who ate thereof have long since mingled with the dust; but he that eateth of this bread shall never hunger; he that drinketh of the waters that pour from the Rock of Ages shall thirst no more. That manna of Moses was for Israel only; this bread is for the world; and whoso cometh to me for it I will not cast out. He may die to sense, but spiritually he shall live, and I will raise him up in the last day. Murmur not among yourselves. Though you reject me, whosoever has felt in himself the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah,* and has been truly taught of the Father, will recognize beneath the disguise of the son of the carpenter the Son of God. Every such a one cometh unto me, and he that believeth on me hath partaken of the true bread of heaven, hath received everlasting life. This bread I will give by no miracle, but by my death. While I live I can not give life to the world. My blood must be spilt and my body broken; for the death of the Messiah, not his coronation, is the life of the world. The bread which I will give is my flesh. "For verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" but "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him."†

The impatient interruptions of the people deepen, as Christ proceeds, into bitter and open indignation. Prosaic natures interpret literally these parabolic sayings; and to drink

* Isaiah liv., 13. † John vi., 26–58.

blood is the very abysm of degradation to the Jew. They that perceive beneath the veil the hidden meaning, are not less indignant at a doctrine which throws open the Messiah's kingdom to all comers, denies to the Jew any pre-eminence, and declares that it is in the death of their king that Israel is to conquer the world. Even among the outer circle of his disciples there be many who pronounce with bitterness against him. "Such language is impious," they cry; "who can endure to listen to it?"* The congregation that gathered in enthusiasm separate in discontent. Even among the twelve, one, feeling his ambitious expectations blasted, manifests to the sensitive apprehension of Jesus signs of that disaffection which later blossoms into treachery.† His companions so ill conceal their disappointment and perplexity that Jesus, beginning already to feel that sense of isolation which saddens all his later life, appeals to them with rare pathos: Will ye also go away? Surely his heart is touched by the response of him whom Nature made spokesman for the rest. To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe—*yea*, *know* that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.‡

The verdict of Nazareth is confirmed at Capernaum. Galilee has rejected the Gospel, and it will not again be preached to her; within her bounds there is no longer safety for her Lord. The Pharisees are laying in wait for his life. Herod is seeking to seize him. The people, advised of the true nature of his mission, turn against him. Among his own disciples many follow him no more. Nor can he accompany his neighbors to the paschal feast at Jerusalem, for the Sanhedrim have pronounced him worthy of death; and if still there are many ready to yield him a warm welcome, it is only as a political Messiah, a national reformer, a Jewish Kossuth, Cromwell, Washington, not as the Lord of life to all mankind.

* John vi., 60; and Alford thereon. † John v., 64–70.

‡ Καὶ ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.—John vi., 69.

While, therefore, all Galilee is turning its face southward to attend the annual gathering of the nation in the Holy City, Jesus proceeds in the opposite direction. Of all the multitude who have hitherto accompanied him, the twelve alone remain still faithful to their Lord. By their following they testify their choice of the new kingdom in preference to the old theocracy; their recognition of the superiority of the claims of the Lamb of God to those of the paschal Lamb which Moses had provided.

An outcast by his own people, an exile from his native land, Jesus enters the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EXILE.*

WHAT were the coasts of Tyre and Sidon? In the early dawn of the race, the great-grandson of Noah—Sidon, son of Canaan†—turning his steps westward to seek his fortunes in a new land, looked down from the heights of Lebanon upon the coast whose fertile plains are kissed by the blue waves of the Mediterranean Sea. At his feet lay a narrow but exceedingly beautiful strip of land,‡ whose verdure was in striking and restful contrast to the arid deserts of Arabia, and the inhospitable snows of the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon which he had crossed in his pilgrimage hither. The breezes that swept over the vast, and, to his eye, illimitable expanse of blue waves, were singularly refreshing to one whose chief experience of wind was the sirocco of the southern desert. He seemed to himself to be the discoverer of a new Eden. There he fixed his future home. On the shore of this waste of waters, remnant of the flood, he laid the foundations of the city which was called by his name, Zidon, or Sidon; and his descendants, peopling this beautiful plain, borrowed the name of his father, and gave to the whole land, which they shared in common with the descendants of other sons of Canaan, the title of their ancestor. Thus Palestine became known in Hebrew literature as the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants as Canaanites. As time rolled on, however, and the origin of this people was lost to view in the

* Matt. xv., 21–39; xvi.; xvii.; xviii.; Mark vii., 24–37; viii.; ix.; Luke ix., 18–50; John vii., 2–10.

† Gen. x., 15.

‡ Twenty-eight miles in length, and from one to four miles in width.

TYRE.

mists of antiquity, the land ceased to bear the name of its first settlers. The Greeks, careless of the past history of these aborigines, but enamored of the palm groves which beautify this plain, called it the land of the palm, in their language the land of the Phoinix, or of Phœnice; the people who inhabited

it Phœnicians. Modern literature, borrowing its terms from that of Greece, has perpetuated this title, by which accordingly the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon are chiefly known in modern history.*

Tyre, an offspring of the original city of Sidon, outgrew her parent, and became in a little while the chief commercial city, not only of Palestine, but indeed of the Orient, if not of the world. Her harbor, quite inadequate for modern ships, gave safe anchorage to the galleys of ancient times. Her site, an island of rock, inaccessible by ordinary approaches from the shore, secured her from roving bands of robbers, and rendered her seemingly safe from those hazards of war which desolated and destroyed so many of her less fortunate neighbors. Joshua, when he occupied the Holy Land, made no attempt to drive out the aborigines from these plains, or to follow them in their retreat to their chief city of Sidon.† David maintained treaties of amity with Hiram, king of Tyre.‡ Solomon renewed and perpetuated them.§ And so, while Israel was in perpetual war with her southern neighbors, the Philistines, she lived in peace with the inhabitants of her northern frontier, finding among these commercial people good market for her wheat and fruits, and needing in return the products of their skill and the imports of their commerce.

The prosperity of these people, however, was not more the result of their natural advantages than of their innate skill and energy. They were the Dutch of the Orient. In the prosecution of commercial enterprises their vigor was boundless. Their ships and caravans penetrated every part of the then known world. They brought gold from the Persian Gulf; silver and iron from the south of Spain; lambs from the Bedouin shepherds of Arabia; wheat and honey from Palestine; wine and fine wool from Damascus; horses and

* See Thomson, Land and the Book, vol. i., p. 239–243; Josephus, Antiquities, i., 6, § 2; Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Phœnicians, § 1.

† Joshua xi., 8; compare Judges i., 31. ‡ 2 Sam. v., 11.

§ 1 Kings v., 1–12.

mules from the shores of the Black Sea.* Wherever their commerce went their colonies followed. Carthage, the long-threatening rival of the Mistress of the World, was but one of the many shoots of Phœnician planting. Their skill in manufactures equaled their energy in commerce. They were the ship-builders of the Mediterranean; wrought curiously in the cedars that grew on the hill-sides of the adjoining Lebanon; worked skillfully in gold, silver, copper, iron; spun, and wove, and embroidered in linen, wool, and silk; extracted from the shellfish that abounded on their shores material for the finest and most elegant purple dyes; and, in brief, constituted their markets of foreign imports and domestic manufacture the emporium for the whole world. They are believed to have been the inventors of letters, unless, indeed, these were the gift of God to man, as in the earlier ages of the world they were believed to have been. They were the first builders of ships, the idea of which Canaan had perhaps borrowed from his grandfather Noah, the first naval architect. How insignificant a relation the size of a country bears to its usefulness receives thus a new illustration in the fact that this little slip of land, scarcely twice as large as the island of Manhattan, is the primeval cradle of commerce and of letters.

Commercial rivalries proved the ruin of this once happy land. Sidon, jealous of her daughter's prosperity, betrayed her. Tyre yielded to the all-conquering arms of Alexander, aided by the fleets of the treacherous mother city. In the dissolution of the conqueror's kingdom Phœnicia became a province of Syria. In the time of Christ she had already lost her individuality. Greek, Syrian, and Canaanite were inextricably mixed in a Syro-Phœnician population, and the once proud land of Phœnice, mother of commerce, and once mistress of the seas, was known to the Grecian and Roman world only by the names of its chief cities as the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. It as yet, however, abated little or nothing of its com-

* For a description of Tyrian manufactures and commerce, see Ezekiel xxvii.

mercial prosperity. It had lost, not its national wealth, only its national life. When Christ looked upon the towers of Tyre, it was still, probably, the largest city in the Holy Land. Jerusalem alone compared with it.

But commercial prosperity can not permanently outlive political decay. Tyre and Sidon are now only remnants of the past. The former city, the home of a few thousand Oriental peasants living in wretched huts, is famous chiefly for the multiplicity of its ruins. A traffic of millstones, which are conveyed hither by caravans from the Hermon, to be shipped thence to Alexandria, is all that is left of its once omnivorous commerce. The granite columns that formerly flashed back the sun from a hundred temples and palaces lie in fragments strewing the sea, imperfect, yet eloquent witnesses to its former glory. On its bald rock, shorn of its ancient architectural grandeur, the fishermen dry their nets, giving to the word of God a literal fulfillment,* while the shallow waters of its once busy harbor, offering no haven for modern commerce, render certain its perpetual realization. The fallen fortunes of Tyre can never be retrieved. Should an honest government ever become the heritage of this now desolate land, should commerce once more cover the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean, and agriculture clothe these now barren hills and plains with vineyards and fields of waving wheat, Tyre must still remain a terrible witness to the certainty of divine judgments, an everlasting monument on whose ruins the traveler will ever read the dread decree, "Thou shalt be built no more."

Into these coasts Jesus now retreated. His object was rest. It was no part of his purpose to preach the Gospel to the heathen.† As yet, indeed, there was no Gospel for the heathen. If, by the coronation of her king, Israel, accepting the universal sceptre which was first proffered to her, would

* "And I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more; for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God."—Ezekiel xxvi., 14.

† Matt. xv., 24.

with her own hands unbolt the gates of proscription and admit Gentile nations to her Temple courts, she might do so; but it must be her own free act. If not, it was necessary that Christ's rejection should be open, public, official, before he turn the enginery of his cross upon those gates, break them down, and fuse in one kingdom all nations. As yet, therefore, he had no Gospel to preach to the heathen. He had only to proffer it in language unmistakable to the Jews. Into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon he came, not to extend his ministry, but to rest from it.

A friendly house gave to him and his twelve companions a hospitable greeting, but it was unable to give him the quiet he desired.* A woman of the neighborhood had heard of his miracles; vague stories had reached her of a descendant of one of the ancient kings of her Jewish neighbors who possessed the same virtues which fable attributed to Solomon.† Devils he cast out, and her daughter was possessed of one. She came to make trial of his skill. But publicity would defeat the very end of Christ's retreat. A single miracle would bring innumerable demands for more. He declined, therefore, to give her audience. She importuned the disciples. The stories which they told her of their master's cures strengthened her faith and intensified the earnestness of her hope. All the mother in her was aroused. These twelve guardians of their master's repose could not withstand her. They went to Jesus with her story to ask him to send her away. Israelites still, they looked with ill-concealed contempt on this woman, in whose veins flowed commingled the blood of three apostate races.‡ She followed the apostles unbidden, forced her way into their master's presence, threw herself at his feet, and implored his aid with all the agonized earnestness of a mother's heart. Jesus,

* "He entered into an house and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid."—Mark vii., 24.

† Josephus, Antiquities, viii., 2, § 5; and Whiston's note thereon.

‡ Greek, Phœnician, Syrian.

weary, way-worn, anxious for rest, sorely needing it, could not deny a cry so earnest. At the same time, he seized the opportunity to teach, by a gentle irony, a lesson to his still narrow-minded followers.

"It is not meet," said he, "to take the bread from these children, and cast it to Gentile dogs."

In the language of good-humored satire, he seemed to adopt the prejudices of his nation. Really he rebuked them, for to Jesus no child of God was in truth a dog. He who had reminded the congregation at Nazareth that the love of God provided for a Phœnician widow while all the widows of Israel were passed by,* had not so soon forgotten his own lesson. The woman's quick intuition read in his face what we fail to fully read in his interpreted words. Her ready repartee is the language of awakened hope, not the last despairing cry of a crushed and broken heart.

"Truth, Lord; but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table."

The mother comprehended the heart of Jesus more accurately than the disciples. Love is his best interpreter. By her faith in his goodness, a faith which his Church was not able to extinguish, she won for her daughter the healing she desired. "O woman!" said Jesus, "great is thy faith! Go thy way. The devil is gone out of thy daughter."†

After this incident Phœnicia can no longer afford Christ repose. Passing northward through the city of Sidon, climbing the cedar-clad hills of Lebanon, that look down upon that most ancient of cities, and thence following down the Jordan from its source at the foot of Hermon's snowy peak, he comes

* Luke iv., 25, 26.

† I find no scholastic authority for this interpretation of this incident. Jesus's reply is generally regarded as a rebuke, or at least a repulsion of the woman, over which cold and seemingly harsh rebuff her faith triumphs; but this interpretation I am quite unable to harmonize either with the circumstances of the account or the general spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is, I think, a rebuke of the Jewish prejudices which still inhered in the disciples, and must have been interpreted to both them and her by a smile and tone which no report could portray.

again to his lake home among the hills of Galilee;* but not to preach.† He has already exemplified his own direction to his apostles: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."‡ He has lifted up his warning voice in solemn denunciation against the cities of the sea. Chorazin and Bethsaida looked on Tyre and Sidon with all the bitterness of a petty envy, aggravated by that of intense religious bigotry. He has told them that, in the day of judgment, the lot of these heathen cities shall be more tolerable than theirs. Capernaum accounted herself the favored child of heaven; but he has warned her that she shall share the obliteration of ancient Sodom.§ He has no new gospel for the cities of Galilee; he avoids the haunts of men; he chooses the mountain solitudes of the eastern shore.‖ When the people, learning perhaps of his retreat from the disciples, who may well have been compelled to go to the cities to buy food, flock in multitudes to him, he heals their sick, and restores their lame and impotent, and, looking with compassion on this fasting multitude, again provides for them by a word, feeding four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fishes. But he sends them quickly thereafter away;¶ nor does he accompany these works of mercy with any farther proclamation of the Gospel.**

Once, indeed, as he descends from the mount of transfiguration, presently to be described, it may seem to his disciples that he will begin again his triumphant career of miracles. The devil that they can not cast out he exorcises with a word; the boy that is left for dead he raises with a touch; and the scornful scribes are again abashed, the downcast disciples tri-

* Mark vii., 31. We follow the reading of Alford (see authorities quoted in his digest of various readings in loco): "And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre, he came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee."

† There is no clear record of any public preaching in Galilee after the sermon on the Bread of Life at Capernaum.

‡ Matt. x., 14.

§ Matt. xi., 20–24.

‖ Matt. xv., 29.

¶ Matt. xv., 32–38; Mark viii., 1–9.

** See Matt. xv., 30, 31.

umphant, the people rejoiced. But this miracle is followed by no others, and it is wrought less in attestation of his Messiahship than at once to rebuke and confirm the wavering faith of his own but half-believing Church.* If he goes into any of the cities, he still endeavors to remain unknown;† when a deaf and dumb man is brought to him, he takes him aside from the multitude before he opens his ears and loosens his tongue;‡ when, in the city of Bethsaida, a blind man is brought to him, it is not till he has led him outside the city walls that he bids him see;§ and alike upon the subjects of his healing‖ and upon his disciples¶ he enjoins secrecy, though for the most part seemingly in vain.** So marked is this change in his ministry—so evident is his effort during these six months of exile to secure retirement and to live unnoticed, that his brethren taunt him with his concealment, and dare him to show himself openly to the world if he be indeed the Messiah that he claims to be.††

Still seeking the repose which Galilee can not give him, he leaves once more the lake, and, following up the Jordan to its head waters, retires with his disciples to the mountainous region whose snows supply the chief rivers and the few lakes of the Holy Land.‡‡

Amid some of the most magnificent mountain scenery of the world, if we may trust the somewhat exaggerated picture of a famous traveler,§§ Mount Hermon rears its venerable head. From its snowy peaks the tourist overlooks the Holy Land from Dan to Beersheba, and from the Mediterranean

* Matt. xvii., 20, 21.

† "And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it."—Mark ix., 30.

‡ Mark vii., 33. § Mark viii., 22–26. ‖ Mark vii., 36; viii., 26.

¶ Matt. xvi., 20; Mark viii., 30; Luke ix., 21.

** Mark vii., 36. Observe, too, how he goes from one district to another, as if seeking for repose, but every where followed by crowds.—Matt. xv., 29, 30, 39–xvi., 1, 4; Mark viii., 22, 27.

†† John vii., 2–5. ‡‡ Matt. xvi., 13. See map, p. 18.

§§ Van der Velde, quoted in Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," p. 397.

Sea to the hills of Bashan. The infant Jordan issues in a triple rivulet from the mountain side as though the rock which Moses struck in the wilderness had been miraculously transplanted to Canaan to provide its sacred river. Its widening valley justifies by its varied foliage, its grassy carpet, and its waving wheat-fields the admiration of the Danites, who, in the childhood years of Judea, chose it as their home.* Here Philip the tetrarch had founded, in mutual honor of himself and his patron, a city which bore their joint names, Cæsarea Philippi—a city whose architectural magnificence is quite as eloquently portrayed by the unexplored ruins which constitute the site of the modern hamlet of Banias as by the glowing pictures of Josephus.† Among these mountains Christ found at last an opportunity, free from the interruptions of an active ministry, for quiet conference with his disciples.

For this period of retirement was also one of increasing disclosure. A veil was over the hearts of Israel that they could not see. Jesus had retreated from the multitude that he might draw aside this veil, and afford his chosen friends a clearer view of himself and his kingdom of suffering love than other eyes were able to bear. He led them into these mountain solitudes as God called Moses into the cloud that enveloped Sinai, not really for purposes of concealment, but of revelation.

This portion of his ministry therefore appears to be almost wholly occupied with instructions concerning the constitution and conduct of his Church. He declares that a living faith in him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," as it is embodied in Peter's ardent repetition of the disciples' common faith, is the rock foundation on which he will build his

* Judges, xviii., 9–10.

† Josephus, Antiquities, xv., 10, § 3; Wars of Jews, i., 21, § 3. For a description of this region, see Pressensé's Life of Christ, p. 396; Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, chap. xii.; and Robinson's Researches, iii., § xv., p. 339 and post.

infant Church, which now for the first time he so entitles;* indicates what must be the instrument of its future warfare —the *cross* of Christ; lays that cross upon all who desire to enroll themselves among his followers; promulgates the law of forgiveness and of discipline—a law which he makes one, but which the Church has too often dissevered; announces that the unity of his Church rests in mutual forbearance, not in domination and submission; and to all his previous instructions concerning prayer, adds, what is the more than royal prerogative of his Church, the promise it too seldom pleads: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."†

By a significant act, he interprets to them the liberty of the Gospel. When the tabernacle was first constructed in the wilderness it was by voluntary offerings. Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring an offering of the Lord, was the divine commandment.‡ But Pharisaism had perverted this free-will offering into a legal exaction. After a long struggle between Pharisee and Sadducee, the former had triumphed, and a poll-tax was laid upon all Israel of a half shekel for the support of the Temple service. They quoted the laws of Moses to sustain them in this exaction.§ But to enforce this as a tax was contrary to the free spirit of the Gospel, if not to that of the Mosaic commonwealth. Jesus had already declared himself openly against the Pharisaic exactions. Whether in this controversy he would side with Sadducee or Pharisee was to the collector of this church tax a matter of uncertainty. He came, therefore, in doubt to Peter with the question, "Doth not your master pay tribute?" Peter, still a Jew, readily pledged Jesus to fulfill the

* Matt. xvi., 13–20. For exposition of this confessedly difficult passage, compare 1 Peter ii., 4–8.

† For these precepts and principles in detail, see Matt. xvi., 13–28; xviii.; Mark viii., 27–38; ix., 31–50; Luke ix., 18–27, 43–50.

‡ *It*, an offering.—Exod. xxxv., 5. § Exod. xxx., 12, 13.

obligations which no other Rabbi would refuse to recognize. But Jesus, though quite ready to contribute to the support of the appointed service even of a corrupted Church, was not willing to sanction a custom so pernicious as that which rests the Church of God on enforced tithes rather than on free contributions. "We are," he says in effect to Peter, "not strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, but sons of the kingdom; and the kingdom must live by the free-will gifts, not by the compulsory payments of its citizens. The Church must be supported as it was built, by willing hearts."

But, that his heart be not thought unwilling, he bids his disciple cast a line into the sea and draw forth a fish, in whose mouth he should find the needed sum. Thus, by a figure, Christ at once proclaims the emancipation of humanity from the thraldom of a Church establishment, and designates as the true substitute therefor a free-will offering by a cheerful giver.*

In these quiet hours of consultation with his disciples, Christ prophesies, as we have said, in language more unmistakable than ever before, his sufferings and death. At the same time, he vouchsafes to their sight a clearer revelation than can be afforded to the ear of that glory which he had with the Father before the beginning of the world; interprets to them the meaning of the enigma, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of,"† and affords them a glimpse of that strength which God's ministering spirits afforded to him—afford, in truth, though in form invisible, to all who follow Christ's footsteps.

The mountain solitudes afforded to Jesus his favorite re-

* Matt. xvii., 24–27. The older interpreters, supposing this to be a Roman tax, misunderstood altogether the meaning of the incident. The more usual modern interpretation reads in this incident only a new declaration by Christ of his divine Sonship, which therefore exempts him from the obligations of common men. (So Alford, Wordsworth, Trench, Eddy.) But Christ declares not merely that the son, but that the *children* are free, and claims exemption, not for himself only, but for his disciples. For fuller exposition of this interpretation, see Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Tribute, and Lange's Life of Christ, vol. iii., p. 353.

† John iv., 32.

treat. Nowhere does man seem so lifted above the vapors and clouds of earth as on one of these peaks whose very air partakes of the purity of heaven. At no time does he so completely lose the sense of man and temporal things, and seem to himself to be standing in the presence of God and eternity, as when from a mountain rock he looks down upon a sleeping world and up into the starry heavens. The habitations of the future seem then close at hand, the habitation of the present far removed. Ascending as his wont one of these mountain peaks for a night of solitude and prayer—perhaps one of the spurs of Mount Hermon, more probably one of the lower hills that skirt the Sea of Galilee, whither it seems probable they had now returned,* Jesus bids Peter, John, and James accompany him. The rest of the disciples await his return at the foot of the mountain.

The sun is already low in the west, and twilight is already gathering over the valley below, as these four friends ascend that unknown hill. At their feet lies the sleeping Lake of Galilee. In the distance opens the vista of the Jordan valley. Perhaps over the intervening hills they can catch even a glimpse of the blue waters of the Mediterranean, glistening in the rays of the setting sun. Gradually darkness steals over the scene; gradually the early lights of the cities of the sea twinkle in the distance. Borne in the fishing-craft across the quiet waters, they creep, like glow-worms, to and fro. A solemn stillness, more solemn than the hush of any cathedral, steals over the hearts of the disciples. A heavy sleep at length overpowers them, and Jesus is left alone with his own unutterable thoughts—alone with his heavenly Father—alone to dwell upon the sorrows of an unrecognized and unappreciated life, and the sterner sufferings of that approaching death whose horrors cast their shadow on his path from the cradle to the grave.

* So Alford. Observe, too, the presence of the scribes and their disputes with the disciples (Mark ix., 14–17), more characteristic of the scene of Christ's earlier labors than of the region of Cæsarea Philippi.

How long the companions of his solitude sleep they know not, nor do we. At length a strange sense of awe steals in upon their dreams. They awake to see their Lord clad in garments luminously white, yet outshone by the glory of his radiant face; to see two visitants from the shadowy realm of the past, in whose spirit-forms they recognize Moses, the lawgiver of the commonwealth, and Elijah, representative of the prophetic order; to hear, in their conversation with him, their recognition of his coming crucifixion even in the midst of this his present glory; to hear a new witness of Jesus's divine character in the voice which speaks from the cloud that receives this vision from their affrighted gaze, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him;" to ponder with awe this intimation that these sacred voices of the past, which have spoken God's will only in fragmentary and imperfect utterances, are henceforth overshadowed by the more perfect revelation of God's law and love in the person of his Son;* and to crave the privilege of abiding on this mountain top in such blessed company, forgetful—rather still spiritually ignorant—of the cup of suffering and baptism of blood which await both him and them.†

In that later scene of midnight prayer, when, in the garden of Gethsemane, they sleep while the Master prays, and rise, awakened by his voice, to see their prophet and king betrayed as a common malefactor, does any thought of this transfiguration recur to their self-reproachful consciences? In gazing ourselves upon this transcendent vision, which still only the few by faith truly perceive, while criticism abides at the foot of the mount,‡ doubting the power of the unseen

* "In many portions and in divers manners, God, having spoken to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days spake unto us in his Son."—Heb. i., 1, 2, Alford's transl. See his notes *in loco* for a striking contrast between the former fragmentary revelations and that in Christ, wherein "God himself, the pure light, unites in one person the whole spectrum."

† Matt. xvii., 1–13; Mark ix., 2–13; Luke ix., 28–36.

‡ "And when he came to his disciples he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them."—Mark ix., 14.

Messiah, we may well heed the rebuking voice of God, "Hear ye him," nor seek to add, by our poor tabernacles of praise, to his transfigured glory.

The time is drawing near when Jesus must be offered up. He has instructed his disciples in the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world. Only the crucifixion, with all its actual agony of fear and anguish—fear on their part and anguish upon his—can complete the instruction. Jesus passes through the district of Galilee still concealed.* He gently parries the taunts of his brethren at this manifest change in his life, before so public, now so hidden.† Bidding them go up to the Feast of the Tabernacles, he awaits their departure; nor is it till the highways are clear of pilgrims that he prepares to follow, still in secret.‡

* Mark ix., 30. † John vii., 3–8. ‡ John vii., 10.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE JUDEAN MINISTRY.*

THE harvest work was over. The golden grain had bowed before the sickle. The autumnal grape had yielded up its juice, by its broken body and the poured libation of its blood, prophesying of that body and that blood which in God's harvest is given for the life of the world. From a thousand fields and vineyards the joyous Israelites, marching in companies and caravans over the intervening hills, were assembling in their holy city to celebrate their autumnal feast. For Thanksgiving-day did not originate with the Puritans. It was borrowed, whether consciously or not, from the Hebraic commonwealth. To that commonwealth, indeed, the world is indebted for many an idea for which undue credit has been given to New England. Between this feast of Puritanism and that of the Orient there was this difference—one lasts but a day, the other consecrated a full week to festivity and rejoicing.

The city had surrendered itself to the season. Autumn seemed to have taken possession of it. The gates and market-places and the broader streets were filled with booths built of branches brought from the groves. This new city of the trees, surrounding the walls of Jerusalem, and making gay with its festoons all the avenues leading up to the Temple, passed even the holy gates. The court of the Gentiles was filled with these huts of the wilderness, that the priests and the Levites might share in the festivities of the joyous encampment; for during the Feast of the Tabernacles the

* John vii.–x.; Luke x., 25–42; xviii., 9–14.

houses were bereft of occupants. No man suffered himself to sleep beneath a roof. The heats of summer were over. The rains of autumn and winter had not yet commenced. Israel did, therefore, but play at encampment. Thus annually the nation reminded itself of the hour when it dwelt in the wilderness, and when even the Temple of God was but a temporary tabernacle. Thus, too, the more pious and prophetic among them reminded themselves that they were but pilgrims and strangers on the earth; that the Holy City itself was not their final resting-place; that the Temple which Solomon constructed, and Herod rebuilt, with its immovable foundations, its massive masonry, its magnificent pillars, its grand courts, was, after all, but a tabernacle in the wilderness; and that Israel, though in Canaan, yet sought a better country, a kingdom above, a city not made with hands. Such was the Feast of Tabernacles. Its scenes of festivity were so marked that Plutarch, who seemed incapable of interpreting Judaism save by the analogy of his own heathen religion, declared that this people consecrated every year seven days to a feast of Bacchus, god of wine.

Jerusalem was crowded. These great religious festivals of Judea brought together not only the inhabitants of Palestine, but the children of God dispersed throughout all the civilized world. Pilgrims came, bringing their sacrifices of thanksgiving from as far west as Cyrene, on the Grecian coast of the Mediterranean; from as far east as the coast of Media; from as far north as the shores of the Black Sea.*

Jerusalem was the religious centre of a circuit whose radii extended nearly one thousand miles in every direction, in an age when a pilgrimage of one hundred miles was equivalent to a modern journey of one thousand. These pilgrims included not only the seed of Abraham, but converts to Judaism from heathen faiths, devout Gentiles wearied with the polytheism of Greece and Rome, though not yet open adherents of the faith of Israel, inquirers whose hearts were stir-

* See Acts ii., 9–11.

red by the noble utterances of the Hebrew poet-preachers, however repelled by the haughty exclusiveness and the puerile ceremonialism of their descendants. A singular congregation was this that gathered in the Temple, in which the swarthy African, the sensual Persian, the cultivated Greek, and the haughty inhabitant of Judea mingled for the hour in a democracy of common worship.

The feast was already half over, and Jesus had not made his appearance. The Galileans brought with them a report of his strange works and stranger doctrines. They told, doubtless, the story of the feeding of the multitude, of the cure of the demoniac in the synagogue, of the raising of Jairus's daughter, of the healing of the centurion's servant, perhaps of the quelling of the tempest, and the walk upon the waves. We may reasonably assume that they had not succeeded so well in their attempt to repeat the parables by the sea-shore, the Sermon on the Mount, and the discourse in Capernaum on the bread of life; for, misunderstanding themselves the meaning of Christ's preaching, how could they convey it to others?

These stories the residents of Judea had received with contemptuous incredulity. Jerusalem was to Palestine in the first century what Rome was to Europe in the Middle Ages, the heart of its hierarchy. The few sincere Israelites who dwelt beneath the shadow of its walls were not able to neutralize the influence of the ecclesiasticism which centred there. Proud of their national blood; tracing their ancestry back to patriarchs who lived long before their national organization; glorying, not in the purity of their lives, but in that of their descent; not in their intellectual and moral worth, but in this, that theirs was the Holy City; theirs the sacred Temple; theirs the inspired Scriptures; theirs the ordained priesthood and the holy prophets, the Judeans were the ecclesiastical autocrats of the first century; and there is no aristocracy more haughty and bigoted than ecclesiastics.

Not all Christ's miracles of mercy could compensate for his

open and undisguised contempt of their religion of fruitless ceremonialism. The stronger his hold upon the common people, the more these priests and Rabbis of a no longer living Judaism despised yet feared him. He had not been to Jerusalem for more than a year. He had suffered the festivals of the Church to pass by unobserved. He had confined his ministry to a province which, however important, was to these churchly autocrats altogether contemptible. They repeated, therefore, to his friends the taunts which Jesus's brethren had employed against him. While the common people, who had flocked from Galilee, and Perea, and the rural districts of Judea, and even the outlying regions of Tyre and Sidon, to hear Jesus, discoursed eagerly, yet in undertones,* Christ's character and works, the Judeans contemptuously asked, "Where is the fellow? Why does he not show himself?"†

So the first days of the feast passed away. In the festivities of the hour the Galilean Rabbi had been perhaps forgotten, when, suddenly and unexpectedly, he appeared in the Temple, publicly teaching. The city was thrown into a ferment by his appearance. The parties already formed in Galilee reappeared in Jerusalem. Many of the people were prepared to receive him with ardent enthusiasm. That he was a Galilean was no objection, certainly, to the Galileans. That he preached a universal kingdom aroused no prejudice in the hearts of the hundreds of proselytes that thronged the narrow streets of Jerusalem. The Gentile pilgrims remembered with gratitude the Rabbi who had cleared their outer court of the traffickers who excluded them and disgraced the Temple. To many of the people he was a prophet. To some the very Messiah.‡ "When Christ cometh," said they, "will he do more miracles than this man hath done?"§ Among these strangers in Jerusalem, many, therefore, crowded about Jesus

* John vii., 13.

† John vii., 11. Their question itself (ἐκεῖνος) shows a hostile spirit.—Alford *in loco.* ‡ John vii., 40, 41. § John vii., 31.

as they had done in Galilee, and were ready to offer again in Judea the crown he had refused on the shores of Lake Tiberias.

The Judeans, on the other hand, looked with feelings of commingled anger and contempt upon this proposer of a new religion. They who had scornfully asked why Jesus did not come to Jerusalem to preach his Gospel of repentance were indignant at what seemed to them his audacity when he did. He preached, not to admiring auditors, as in Galilee, but to an excited and tumultuous mob. He was constantly interrupted by the jibes and jeers of the crowd. His miracles, of which he wrought but few,* produced as little permanent impression upon the residents of the city as his words. He made few permanent converts, and had no open and confessed followers. Attempts were repeatedly made to foment public prejudice against him.† Plans for his assassination were secretly formed.‡ Twice in three months he was mobbed.§ Once an order for his arrest was issued, but left unexecuted.‖ His disciples dared not accompany him. Only one has preserved any report of his teachings. Jesus seems not to have spent a single night within the city walls.¶ And his ministry in Judea, which lasted, with interruptions, from the Feast of the Tabernacles in October to the Feast of Dedication in December, was chiefly valuable as a witness against the city which, by its rejection of its Lord, has forever deprived itself of all right to the title of the Holy City.

Of the subjects of Christ's Temple teaching during this eventful week of the feast we know but little. The merest fragments of it have been preserved to us. But there is enough to indicate its character. The Judeans, though blind-

* The cure of the blind man (John ix.) is the only one of which any detailed account is given; but it must be remembered that John alone gives us any account of Jesus's ministry in Judea, and John never recounts a miracle except as it illustrates some spiritual truth, or introduces us to some spiritual discourse.

† John vii., 15, 20, 27, 41, 52; viii., 48.

‡ John vii., 19, 25; viii., 37.

§ John viii., 51; x., 31.

‖ John vii., 32, 45.

¶ John viii., 1.

ed by prejudice, were familiar with the holy Scriptures. They were able to comprehend, if they chose to do so, the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Christ therefore spoke to them thereof with a plainness which never characterized his public preaching to the humbler peasant population of Galilee. He set forth clearly his divine origin.* He declared in no parable his approaching death.† He proclaimed himself, what his Church has ever believed him to be, the only-begotten Son of the Father,‡ the manifestation to humanity of the invisible Jehovah.§ And he availed himself of the symbolic services of the Temple to indicate more clearly his character and his commission.

On each day of the feast the high-priest brought water for the Temple service from the Pool of Siloam, and poured it out upon the altar. The people accompanied this priestly service, marching to the music of the trumpet, waving their palm branches, and chanting in grand processional choral from one of their ancient prophets: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."‖ Thus they reminded themselves of the day when, at the word of Moses, living waters gushed from the rock in the wilderness, and revived their hope of the promised hour when the Spirit of God should be poured out as water, and their sons and their daughters should prophesy, and their old men dream dreams, and their young men see visions.¶ "Whoever," say the Rabbis, "has not seen the rejoicing in the drawing of this water, hath seen no rejoicing at all." And as the dusk of the seventh evening began to indicate that the religious ceremonies of the week were drawing to their close, all Israel crowded into the court of the women; the great Temple choir made its arches echo with their magnificent chorals; religious dances accompanied these sacred songs; and a brilliant illumination cast its light from the Temple windows over the entire city.

Jesus, reminding the people of these well-recognized feat-

* John vii., 29, 30. † John vii., 34, 35. ‡ John viii., 18, 19.
§ John viii., 20. ‖ Isa. xii., 3. ¶ Joel ii., 28, 29.

ures of their festival, declared that the hour to which these symbolic services pointed had already come. "If any man thirst," said he, "let him come unto me and drink." "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* Jesus is himself the Rock of Ages. Every true follower of Jesus becomes in turn a spring in the wilderness, and by the cheeriness of his presence refreshes many weary souls. "I am the light of the world," again he said: "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."† Jesus, more than the pillar of cloud and fire that leads Israel only, brighter than the Shekinah which filled the Jewish Temple only, is the light of the whole world, and from his sacred hill his beams go forth a light unto all nations.

These sacred instructions, as we have said, were delivered despite perpetual interruptions. Christ's teaching was not that of a sermon, but that of a dialogue; not with honest inquirers or perplexed skeptics, but with bigoted, resolute foes.

The Judeans denied his right to preach at all. He was not in the ministerial succession; he had never been ordained. Any one might, indeed, repeat the lessons of regularly-recognized Jewish scribes; but a rule, analogous to that which still prevails in most Church communions, forbade any Rabbi to teach new truths except he was a regular graduate of one of the theological schools. He might catechize, but he could not preach. This rule the Jews cited against Jesus. "How," said they, contemptuously, "does this man know any thing of sacred literature, being no graduate?" Jesus, in reply, defended the right of lay preaching, while he pointed out the only true source of all ministerial authority. "My doctrine," said he, "is not mine, but his that sent me." He that is ordained by the Spirit of God has all the ordination which Jesus had. He who has not received the baptism of the Spirit is not in orders, whatever bishop may have laid hands upon him.‡

*. John vii., 37, 38. † John viii., 12. ‡ John vii., 15–18.

As little inclined to welcome any contribution to the common weal of humanity, if proffered by any one without their favored circle, as the genuine Chinaman is to receive any civilization that has originated beyond the bounds of his Celestial Empire, the Judeans derided the idea of a Galilean prophet. "When Christ cometh," said they, "no man will know whence he is; but the plebeian birth of this son of the Galilean carpenter we all know." Jesus, replying, calmly asserted his divine origin, and declared that they neither knew him, nor, despite their claim to be the children of God, did they know his Father, whence he proceeded, and by whom he was sent.*

The popular enthusiasm among the pilgrim strangers was too strong to be disregarded; but the Judeans attempted to turn it against Jesus by reviving the charge of Sabbath-breaking. In the very act of healing a poor cripple he had violated the Rabbinical precept, "Let no one console the sick or visit the mourning on the Sabbath day." Jesus replied by setting against the Rabbinical precept the precept of the Scriptures and the practice of the priesthood. The Judeans circumcised without scruple on the Sabbath, that the ceremonial law of Moses might not be violated; how, then, could they find fault with him, who had made the impotent man every whit whole, that the greater law of mercy might be maintained?†

Defeated and humiliated, Jesus's foes resorted to the common appeal of moral weakness—brute force. They demanded indignantly that the authorities should prevent this pestilential heresy by arresting the prophet who preached it.‡ But when, complying with the demand, the Sanhedrim sent the police of the Temple to arrest him, there was something in his air and manner which deterred them. The divinely-inspired courage which sustained Luther in the Diet of Worms, in a larger measure abiding in Christ, was his sufficient safe-conduct in Jerusalem, and they returned with no other ex-

* John vii., 27, 30. † John vii., 21–24. ‡ John vii., 27–32.

cuse for their failure to carry out the orders of their superiors than "Never man spake as this man."*

So flagrant, indeed, was the proposed illegality of the chief priests and rulers, the leaders of the Judean party, that it even evoked a protest from one of their own number. Nicodemus, professing no friendship for Jesus, demanded that the forms of law should not be disregarded in his condemnation. "Doth our law," said he, "judge any man before it hear him, and learn what he doeth?" But these followers of Moses, who could quote his law when it served their purpose, and disregard it when it did not, silenced this demand for legal proceedings by one of those appeals to partisan spirit as effective in the nineteenth century as in the first. "Art thou also," they replied, "of Galilee? for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."† They were wrong. Jonah was a Galilean; perhaps Amos also. Prejudice blinded them to their own history.

Thus baffled, the Judeans resorted to a stratagem to arouse the prejudices of the populace, whom they professed to despise, but whom they dared not disregard. To this attempt we are indebted for an incident which the pen of the poet and the pencil of the painter will never weary of portraying.

The law of Moses provided the penalty of death for the crime of adultery.‡ In that early age, and in a polygamous community, severe penalties were needed to keep sacred the marriage bond. No less were they needed to prevent that private revenge which our laxer code of modern morals winks at; for the husband whose honor is not protected by the law will be sure to avenge his dishonor by his own hand. This provision of the Mosaic code had, however, long since become obsolete. There is, indeed, no authentic case in Jewish history of an execution occurring under it. This forgotten statute of the past the Jewish Rabbis now revived, not for the purpose of securing purity in society, but for the purpose of confounding and silencing Jesus.

* John vii., 32, 45–49. † John vii., 50–52. ‡ Levit. xx., 10.

A woman in the very act of adultery was seized by some members of the priestly party. Her guilty paramour was permitted to escape, for then, as now, the penalties of unchastity were practically visited only upon the less guilty sex; and while the glad services of the feast were going on, up the Temple steps, through the great gate, into the outer court of the Gentiles, where worshipers, with palm branches in their hands and songs of rejoicing in their hearts, were going to and fro, a tumultuous crowd, whose base passions were unmistakably written in their exulting faces, came, dragging after them this woman, whose heart beat with terror, and whose face, mantled with red, she vainly sought to hide in her disheveled garments. Forced through the crowd that were listening to Jesus's words, and cast contemptuously at his feet, she crouched in shame and terror there, while the priests eagerly demanded of the Galilean Rabbi his solution of the problem.

"Master, this woman was taken in adultery—in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?"

The problem was a perplexing one. Should he decline to adjudge the case—he, King of Israel—he who, among the Galilean mountains, had put his precepts above those of Moses in the words "But I say unto you." Should he release her—he who had indignantly denied the charge already brought against him of seeking to overturn the statutes of the ancient commonwealth; who had declared that not one jot or tittle should pass away unfulfilled, and that whosoever relaxed its least precept should be least in the kingdom he had come to establish? Should he then adjudge her guilty, revive this long-since-forgotten law, and give assent to its enforcement—he who had received among his disciples the publican and the harlot; who had suffered unrebuked the homage of a woman of the town; who had come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them—could he thus belie himself? Indignant at the base duplicity which could intrude

THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

such a scene as this upon the Temple service, Jesus disregarded the clamor of the crowd, and, stooping, wrote upon the ground as one preoccupied with his thoughts. Then lifting himself up, in a single sentence of bitter irony that seemed to condemn the accused, he pronounced judgment against her self-constituted accusers: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

Unchastity was a universal vice in the first century. Palestine had borrowed from the Gentile world this sin, if it had learned no other. What must be the purity of that society in which the Church awarded to every man a divorce when he wearied of his wife, and the king openly trampled under foot the laws of God and the decencies of life with impunity as Herod Antipas had done, let the imagination conceive. Nowhere did this vice so run rampant as among the priests. Epicureans in philosophy and voluptuaries in practice, their licentiousness was no secret to the common people; and this sharp, decisive sentence, whose significance has puzzled some modern commentators, was instantly apprehended by the multitude. Stung by his words, whose severity was intensified by the fire that flashed for the moment from his upraised eyes, these elders of the people* slunk away from the shame of Christ's open and scornful condemnation. The woman was left alone to lift her trembling, tearful face in thankfulness, but in no self-exultation, to the Rabbi who had preserved her life. To her priestly accusers he had spoken in words of fire; to her he uttered only words of mercy: "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."†

Thus passed the week of thanksgiving in the Temple. By day Jesus taught in the outer courts, in the midst of an excited and sometimes angry crowd. By night he pillowed his head under the trees that give to the Mount of Olives its name,‡ or sought retirement in the friendly house of Martha

* John viii., 9. Beginning at the eldest—Greek *πρεσβυτέρων*, almost universally translated elders; generally as an official designation in connection with the word *rulers*. † John viii., 2–11. ‡ John viii., 1.

and Mary, in the suburban village of Bethany. Here, at least, he found warm welcome, and here he loved to come for rest, not work. Wearied with the day of preaching, in the midst of perpetual contradictions, to a people who purposely misconstrued every word, he found in the disciple who loved to sit quiet at his feet and drink in his instruction far sweeter refreshment than in the supper which her sister, with equal devotion, but less spiritual sympathy, would fain provide for him.

Whoever has attempted to discourse of higher truths to unappreciative audiences, or has faced a storm of angry and bigoted prejudice, can appreciate the sweetness of that rest which, after such a scene, was afforded by the presence and the audience of one sympathetic and congenial soul.*

At length the feast drew to its close. The tabernacles were taken down. The citizens returned to their houses and resumed their customary avocations. The city doffed its holiday garments, and put on once more its business attire. The pilgrim strangers dispersed to their several homes, but the Galilean Rabbi did not retrace his steps to Galilee. Wherever his work called him he found his home; and the dispersion of the foreign element, if it removed a protection personal to himself, also removed all danger of partisan violence between Judean and Galilean. Christ therefore remained in the Holy City—remained to speak yet more distinctly and emphatically the truths of his kingdom in the face of an increasing hostility that finally culminated in a serious mob.

The Jews taunted him with the lowliness of his birth. He unequivocally denied that he was of earthly parentage. "Ye are from beneath," said he; "I am from above." They affected to misunderstand his declaration, "Whither I go ye can not come." "Will he go unto the despised among the Gentiles?" said they, sneeringly, "or will he take his life with his own hands?" In language which no Jew could fail to

* Luke x., 38–42.

understand, he replied to their sneers by prophesying his crucifixion. They boasted of the purity of their blood, and travestied the mystery of his incarnation by an imputation which even they dared not frame openly into words. "We," said they, scornfully, "are not born of fornication." Jesus denied that they were the true seed of Abraham, still less were they the children of God. Their deeds attested their true—that is, their spiritual parentage. They were the children of the devil. His promise of immortality to all that believed in him they sneeringly met with the question, "Art thou greater than our father Abraham?" Jesus replied unequivocally that he was; and in very simple words, which the Jews certainly could not misunderstand, he applied to himself the title which Jehovah had assumed at the burning bush. "I am that I AM," said God. "Before Abraham was, I am," said Jesus.

The greatest benefactors of their race come out of the darkness and disappear in darkness again. God only lives in a perpetual present. Other lights rise and set. This sun nor waxes nor wanes. "Abraham *became*, Christ *is*."

That the Jews thus understood Jesus is evident by their action. These discussions had lasted perhaps several days. There is nothing to indicate how long. The cup of their gradually accumulated wrath was now filled. The cry of blasphemy was instantly and angrily raised. Workmen were busy repairing the outer buildings of the Temple. The stones which they employed were close at hand. The people seized these instruments of the most common Jewish punishment—stoning. But, before they could lay hold on Jesus, he escaped within the Temple, passed through some of its numerous gates in another direction, and made good his escape.*

Driven from Jerusalem, Jesus continued his ministry in the rural districts of Judea. Walking in quietness, almost in secrecy, the feet of Jesus have left no prints by which history can trace his course. From the imperfect records of these

* John viii., 12–59.

few weeks of his Judean life we gather some fragments only of his teaching.

In the parable of the good Samaritan he exemplifies the meaning of his golden rule, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you, and rebukes that kind of religion which manifests itself in great devotion to the Church and great indifference to humanity. By selecting the Samaritan as a type of moral goodness, he teaches the lesson, so hard to be learned, of the brotherhood of man. By attributing to this despised Samaritan this simple and unostentatious act of sincere charity, he depicts the ideal of love as one that can disregard alike natural, religious, and personal prejudices. By the simple story which he employs, he portrays the essential characteristics of true benevolence, which always springs from compassion, and serves with equal readiness by gifts of money and by consecration of personal service. And by selecting the priest and Levite as types of the opposite spirit of indifference to the claims of philanthropy, he throws new light upon the meaning of the prophet's declaration, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and offers a sharp rebuke to that spirit of ecclesiasticism which, now as then, is often too busy about the services of the Temple and the errands of the Church to give thought and care to suffering humanity.*

Every man who, on his way to the services of the sanctuary, passes indifferently and unconcernedly the abodes of wretchedness, ignorance, and crime, repeats the experience of this priest and Levite. Every man who, moved by a genuine compassion, turns aside from his ordinary avocations at some self-sacrifice to lift up the down-trodden and restore the fainting and the suffering, whatever may be his creed or his nation, repeats the experience of the good Samaritan. This drama is thus perpetually repeated; and in the nineteenth century as in the first, the orthodoxy of a noble life is better than that of mere creeds and churchly tradition.

In the great Jewish feast that brought together the out-

* Luke x., 25–37.

casts of Judea and the haughty members of the Maccabean party, Jesus probably found both the characters in the simple parable of the Pharisee and the publican.* What he had taught the Galileans in the hour when he welcomed the penitential tears of the woman that was a sinner in the house of Simon, he repeats to the Judeans by this story borrowed from actual life. Humility is the key to the heart of God. The corrupt politician and apostate Jew, become camp-follower of a heathen court, in the hour when he is conscious of his sins, and, forsaking, implores mercy for them, draws nearer to the universal Father than the complacent churchman who employs the language of humility to cover a heart of pride, and who, under pretense of acknowledging the divine grace, boasts himself of the purity of his morals and the punctilious observance of his religious duties. The former has nothing to commend him but his sense of sin. The other possesses the three qualities which popular opinion still accepts as the criteria of character—a moral life, a rigorous regard to religious observances, and a liberal support of religious institutions. But in the eye of God the cry of the penitent is sweeter than the thanksgiving of the poor but proud.

The hills of Judea abound with pasturage. From the days when David watched his father's flock near Bethlehem till now, these grass-clad rocks have furnished sweet herbage for feeding flocks of sheep. The shepherd, leading them through a fenceless country, has need to keep sharp watch; and when, attracted by the corn-fields on either side, a sheep wanders off for richer pasturage, he soon pays the penalty of his error with his life; for the limestone hills are full of caves, and if he escape the prowling wolf, he falls a prey to the dishonest Bedouin. These flocks, then as now, afforded to the wandering children of the desert a rare prize. And the shepherd, not always as successful as David, defends his helpless flock sometimes by his death. This life of the herdsman furnishes Jesus with a text for a beautiful pastoral of Christian expe-

* Luke xviii., 9–14.

rience. He is the true shepherd. However indifferent the Jews may be to his word, his own sheep hear and know his voice. They follow him. They feed from his hand. Assailed by crafty and dangerous foes, he saves them by the sacrifice of his own life. This fold is not comprised within the narrow bounds of any race or any church, but whosoever accepts his voice and follows his lead is recognized as of his flock, whom he shall bring at last to the fields of everlasting green, and the pure waters of the River of Life.*

If in this Judean ministry Jesus wrought fewer miracles than in Galilee, they were no less significant. The story of but one is recorded by the evangelist—the cure in the streets of Jerusalem of a beggar, blind from his birth. The case is chiefly remarkable from the subsequent investigation to which it led. It seems almost to satisfy the demands of modern skepticism. The people brought the subject of the case to the Supreme Court. The case was judicially investigated. The blind man's identity was established by his own testimony, and corroborated by that of his parents. That he was born blind was established by the same indisputable evidence. The value of this evidence is enhanced by the fact that his parents were reluctant witnesses, and that the man himself had so little interest to further the cause of Christ that he did not even so much as know who he was; and, finally, so clear was the case, that after the utmost endeavor to browbeat the witness, the court resorted to the sorry expedient of excommunicating him, that they might thus cast discredit on his story.†

So passed away three months of almost absolutely unrecorded work.

The month of December, with its leafless trees, its brown hill-sides, and its continuous rains, brings with it the Feast of Dedication. Instituted by the Maccabean dynasty, a national rather than a Church festival, observed only by the Judeans, chiefly by the Maccabean party, it brought together

* John x., 1–18. † John ix.

the haughtiest of the Jewish autocrats, and the more narrow-minded and bigoted of the Jewish people. In this feast there was nothing to attract Jesus save the opportunity once more to speak to the heart of Judaism.

That opportunity Jesus embraced. But a single sermon was all that the impatience of the Jews would suffer to fall from his lips.*

No sooner had he made his appearance in the Temple than a threatening crowd surrounded him. They demanded that he make instant and plain declaration of his mission. "If thou be the Christ," they cried, "tell us plainly." Jesus at once complied. In language which the historian must interpret as the hearers did, however theological controversy may seek to clothe it with peculiar meaning, he replied, "I and my Father are one." In these words he confirmed the impression produced by his previous declarations. He aroused the same enraged hostility. Unchecked by fears of a foreign populace, a fiercer onset than before was made upon him. They had demanded that he speak plainly. They mobbed him when he did. With that same majestic mien that had already carried him through two similar scenes, he quelled the populace for the moment. He cited against them their own Hebraic Scriptures. He repeated, in language stronger, if that were possible, than before, his mystical union with his Father. Then he bid adieu to the city which so strangely belied its name—Inheritance of Peace. His Judean ministry was at an end. Nor will he return to Jerusalem again until he returns to fulfill the prophecy of his pastoral, and on the mount where a lamb slain saved the life of Abraham's only son, lay down his own life for the life of his sheep.

* See John x., 22–39, for this sermon and its reception.

CHAPTER XXV.

PARABLES IN PEREA.*

EAST of the River Jordan lies a wild and romantic region, which is, to the present day, a *terra incognita.* Its mountains, walling out the Eastern deserts, afford a fitting retreat for plundering tribes of Arabs. Few of the hosts of travelers who annually visit the Holy Land are venturesome enough to invade its territory. Even those whose erudite works are the standards of scholars leave us in ignorance of that portion of the ancient domain of Israel. Many of them seem even to imagine that the Jordan valley constituted its eastern boundary. Even such writers as Stanley, Robinson, and Ritter give little or no account of this district, concerning which little is known except such scanty information as can be gathered from a few papers, and reports of one or two travelers more adventurous than their fellows.

This unknown region went, in the time of Christ, under the general name of Perea. The word is of Greek origin, and signifies Beyond. It was used by the Western populace to describe the country beyond the Jordan. It included the districts known in earlier times as Bashan and Gilead. A plateau whose level plains are elevated two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea, it appears to possess a still greater elevation by reason of its western border, the Jordan valley, which is sunk one thousand feet below that level. In the south a land "tossed into wild confusion of undulating plains,"† in the north its hills rise into mountains that merge

* Matt. xix.; xx., 1–16; Mark x., 1–31; Luke ix., 51–62; x., 1–24; xiii., 22–35; xiv.–xvii.; xviii., 15–30. † Stanley, Sinai and Pal., p. 320.

at length in the range of Lebanon and anti-Lebanon. Its mountain streams and springs are never wholly dry; forests of oak cap its hill-tops; grassy downs afford on its plains admirable pasturage. Now, as in ancient times, it is characteristically "a place for cattle." The high hills of Bashan, the oaks of Bashan, the strong bulls of Bashan, have been made ever-memorable by the sayings of the poet-king.

A wild and rugged region, its history partakes of its geographical character. Among the hills of Gilead, Jephthah gathered the children of Israel for his successful campaign against his southern neighbors, the children of Ammon; here David sought a refuge from the brief rebellion of his son; here the sons of Saul found a home after their father's death. From Gilead came the ascetic prophet of Judah's degenerate days, Elijah, the Bedouin wanderer, bold, active, circumspect, partaking of the very character of the scenery in the midst of which he was reared; and here John the Baptist, in spirit Elijah risen from the dead, prepared for his brief but significant ministry.*

Little as is known of this district, there is enough to indicate that at the time of Christ it was fertile and populous. This region, which now only the boldest traveler dare venture into, was traversed by Roman roads, which aided to make it a favorite route for pilgrims from Galilee to Jerusalem. Where now is only to be seen the nomadic cities of the Bedouin Arabs, formerly ten flourishing cities, built by Roman hands, afforded permanent homes to an industrious population. These now deserted hills were dotted with a hundred villages; these now desolate but once grassy downs were covered with herds and flocks.†

Into this region Christ now entered. He had preached his

* For a farther account of these incidents in the history of Perea, some of which indicate its character, see Numb. xxxv, 1; Judges xi., 29; 2 Sam. ii., 8; xvii., 22; 1 Kings xvii., 1; Luke i., 80.

† The cities of Perea gave to its southern portion the name of Decapolis, and it is said that the Jordan alone contains the ruins of one hundred and twenty-seven villages.—Smith's Bible Dict., art. Bashan.

Gospel in Galilee, and it had been rejected; he had proclaimed it in Jerusalem, and he had been driven by violence from the city. It remained to proffer it to the scattered Israelites dispersed throughout Perea. Intermixed with a heathen population, descendants many of them of the lost tribes, tracing their genealogy back with difficulty to the period of the restoration, living in intimate contact with the Gentile inhabitants of the Roman cities, the obscure Jews of Perea, no less than the provincial Jews of Galilee, were looked down upon with undisguised contempt by the haughty inhabitants of Jerusalem.

But they were Israelites and dwellers in the land of Israel, and Christ's mission would not be ended until he had preached the Gospel of his kingdom throughout the entire Holy Land.

Little, we have said, is known of this country or its history. A similar obscurity envelops the ministry of Jesus there. Nearly all our information concerning it is derived from one evangelist—Luke. Some scattered fragments are added by Matthew and Mark. Not one of them attempts to follow Jesus in his tours from city to city, or to trace the development of his doctrine, or its effect upon the people. It is, indeed, rather a matter of rational conjecture than of positive and definite information that he spent these winter months in the district of Perea at all. It would be idle, therefore, in the entire absence of any reliable information, to endeavor to trace his ministry in its chronological order. All such attempts necessarily substitute surmise for reliable information. We only know that it was an itinerant one, and that he journeyed from as far north as the Sea of Tiberias to the Ford of Bethabara.* Without, therefore, attempting to trace in detail his course, we shall simply gather up the records of the evangelists, and present, in a few brief paragraphs, the principal results of the two or three months' work on which the Savior now entered.

* Compare Luke ix., 51; xiii., 22; xvii., 11; and Alford *in loco*, Matt. xix., 1; Mark x., 1. This period is confessedly the most difficult in the

In Perea he preaches the same glad tidings of great joy, though in new forms, which he has already preached in the cities by the sea and in the Temple at Jerusalem. He enforces it by like miracles of mercy, though in diminished numbers.* He employs in this ministry the same instruments—parables. Nowhere does he set forth more clearly the precepts of a pure morality; nowhere in forms more sublime the love of God, and the gospel of grace which flows from it; nowhere more powerfully the true values of life; nowhere—unless it be in the closing days of his Judean ministry—more forcibly the solemn sanctions of the future.

The old objection is brought against him that he attracts only publicans and sinners by his ministry. He replies by setting forth the medicinal love of God in forms that are unsurpassed even in his own incomparable teaching. No single story suffices to illustrate that love. He combines three. In two of these he exhibits the act of God in going after the sinner; in the third he portrays the sinner coming back to God.

A shepherd has missed a sheep. He leaves the ninety-nine in the fold to go in the wilderness in pursuit of the one that is wandering. A housewife has lost a piece of money. She leaves the nine pieces that are safe that she may search for the tenth. There is an avarice of love, that is not content with its possessions so long as any thing remains to be reclaimed. God, in Christ, goes after the wanderer; searches in the dark places of the earth for those who bear, like the

chronology of Christ's life. On the whole, the most reasonable hypothesis seems to be that the synoptists omitted all account of the Judean ministry, which John alone records; that after Christ's second expulsion from Jerusalem Jesus went into Perea, and, journeying through the borders of Perea, Samaria, and Galilee, came again to Bethabara, where the synoptists resume their narrative. The reasons which have led me to adopt this conclusion can not be stated without a chronological discussion too long for such a note as this. According to this explanation, John vii.–x., and a considerable portion of Luke x.–xviii., with some other fragments of chapters, narrate incidents and teachings which occurred between Matt. xviii., 35, and xix., 1.

* Luke xiii., 11–17; xiv., 1–6; xvii., 11–19.

coin, the image of their Maker stamped upon them; and when he has found and reclaimed the lost, his heart thrills with a new pleasure. He himself rejoices with joy unspeakable in every new satisfaction of his love.

Yet more strikingly does Jesus epitomize his Gospel in that parable which has been well called "the crown and pearl of all his parables."* In a story as simple as it is sublime—a story which the world is never tired of repeating—Jesus both portrays the experience of the soul, and unlocks the heart of God, that he may disclose the treasures of his divine love. The key with which he does this is the one word Father.

A wayward son, impatient of paternal restraint, demands of his father his future inheritance. This unreasonable demand is complied with. The boy departs from his home. He spends his substance in a reckless and dissipated life. For a time all goes well with him; but by-and-by a famine arises in the land. His money is spent; his friends disappear with it; he begins to be in want; he resolves, by his independent exertions, to retrieve his fallen fortunes; at least he will not return to his father a beggar. The result is only deeper degradation. He becomes a swineherd; he craves even the carob pods that the swine eat. In all this experience he has not, however, utterly forgotten his early home and his father's love. These reminiscences now come back to him like a gospel from a distant land. He has not wholly eradicated the better nature which his father's blood supplies. This re-asserts itself. He comes to himself; he resolves to arise, and return to his father; he will make no excuses for the past; he will frankly confess his fault, "Father, I have sinned;" he will solemnly consecrate his future, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." It must be confessed that the motive which actuates him is not of the highest. It is simply his want: "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" But he puts his resolution into execution. A long and weary journey is it to

* Stier's Words of Jesus, vol. iii., p. 227, quoted in Alford on Luke xv., 11.

his home. As he draws near the consummation of his purpose his heart fails him; he lingers afar off. Oh feeble faith, shamed by the warm welcome which awaits him. Beneath his beggarly disguise the father's keen love discerns his child. His heart is stirred with a deep compassion; he runs forth to meet him; falls upon his neck; bestows on him the kiss of love; asks no questions; imposes no probation; buries the past; stays not even to hear the request, "Make me as one of thy hired servants;" receives him as a son; strips off his rags; orders the best robe; the ring, symbol of authority; the shoes, symbol of the freeman; and in a feast utters his own joy, and effaces from the heart of his forgiven son all remembrances of his sorrow.*

That son is a sinful world; that father is its loving God; that experience of famine in the far country is the experience of every one that lives without God and without hope in the world; that failure of the swineherd is the failure of every one who attempts reformation without repentance and return to his heavenly Father; that warm welcome is the welcome which divine love longs to accord to every wanderer weary of his sins and willing to return to his Father's home. Alas! the elder brother that murmurs at this welcome is not without his type even in the Christian Church. Alas! despite our eulogies of this parable, society still scans the repentance and return of any one whose errors or whose sins it has condemned, regardless or strangely ignorant of its own. For the fallen one it has rarely a robe, a ring, a fatted calf, or even a heart of pitying love.

Catholic as is the Gospel which Jesus preaches, all are not sharers in its benefits. Great as is the love of God, some are lost to that love at last. He has already, in Galilee, prophesied with startling distinctness the coming of a day when every tree that bears not good fruit will be hewn down and cast into the fire; when the wheat will be gathered into barns, but the tares burned up with unquenchable fire; when

* Luke xv.

many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out. This teaching he repeats in Perea in language quite as unmistakable.

On one occasion he is asked directly whether there be many that are saved. He declines to answer this as a theoretical question, for Jesus never suffered himself to discuss abstract theology; but he affords to it an intensely practical reply. "Strive," he says, "to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door."* There is no one that is not able now. There are many that will not be able then.

On another occasion, at a dinner-party, a guest utters the apostrophe, Blessed are they that eat bread in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus replies by a parable that it doubtless seems to all that the future of the children of God is blessed, and yet many shut themselves out from that blessedness. The kingdom of heaven, he says, is like a royal marriage feast. Israel is first invited; but the Israelites, absorbed with their possessions, their business, and their pleasures, decline the invitation, and against them the king, sending out into the Gentile highways and hedges for his guests, fulminates the terrible decree, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."†

This solemn truth receives yet more emphatic utterance in another parable. It is a proverb in the Talmud that only a handbreadth separates between heaven and hell. Christ teaches a very different doctrine. He graphically portrays the condition of the two extremes of society—the man of wealth on the one hand, guilty of no crime but the common one of indifference to the wants of humanity, and finding his life in purple and fine linen, and sumptuous faring every day; and, on the other, the beggar, full of sores, who lies at his

* Luke xiii., 23–30. † Luke xiv., 15–24.

door, and feeds on the crumbs that fall from his table. Life is full of these extremes, Oriental life especially; and many a Dives still lives, honored and respected by his fellow-men, quite indifferent—in truth, ignorant—of the Lazarus who dwells in the tenement-house across the way. Death changes the scene. The rich man dies, and his body is carried to its tomb in all the pomp of wealth. Lazarus dies, and is borne to the bosom of Abraham in the arms of angels. The patient piety of the poor has its recompense; for the haughty child of pride and wealth the hour of repentance has passed, and between the heaven of the one and the hell of the other there is no mere handbreadth, but a great gulf fixed—a gulf so wide that neither penitence on the one side, nor mercy on the other, can ever bridge it.*

Nowhere does Jesus set forth more clearly love as the central principle of that religion which he has come to establish. It is not enough to sit at his feet and listen to his instructions. It is not enough to share some sacred seasons of hospitable communion with him. In that day of great surprises, many, to their astonishment, he says, will be cast out who have eaten and drunk in his presence, and in whose streets he has taught, but who, despite their profession of religion, have been practicers of iniquity.†

He commends the practice of charity even by the lower motive of self-interest. He tells the story of a steward who, having defrauded his master, was about to lose his place. Unable to work, and ashamed to beg, he availed himself of the last hours of his stewardship to remit the debts of his lord's tenants. Thus he secured their good will, and insured himself a home among them when he was finally ejected from his office. If, in substance, says Christ, applying this story, men had the same foresight in regard to eternal as to earthly matters, they would use their present opportunities to secure, by their benefactions, the good will of their companions. There is no one that can render a perfect account

* Luke xvi., 14–31. † Luke xiii., 26, 27.

of his stewardship to God at last; but, failing in that, there is no one who can not, by his active benevolence, procure witnesses to his spirit of love against the day of judgment.*

This is no Gospel of Ebionism. Jesus does not inveigh against wealth; he teaches how to use it.

Jesus is accustomed to set in vivid contrast the appearances of the present and the realities of the future. It is this contrast which invests with a singular awe the simple story of the rich fool. He is a well-to-do and worldly-wise Perean farmer. He has abundant land. His farms are bursting with plenty. His stores perplex him. "What shall I do," he says to himself, "because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" This is a very common trouble among capitalists. He does not know how to invest. He forms his resolution to pull down his barns and build greater. The thought of the needy and the suffering, and of the means of real usefulness to others which his possessions afford to him, has never occurred to his selfish soul. He has no other message to himself than "Take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." He will, that is, retire on his fortune. To men he seems wise, prudent, sagacious. God calls him to his account with a sharp rebuke of his folly: "Fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided." Not every one is wise who knows how to acquire. He is truly wise only who knows how to impart.†

* Luke xvi., 1–13. For a collection of curious interpretations of this difficult parable, see Trench on the Parables, p. 345, 365, and note. I have followed substantially the interpretation of Alford, *in loco*. So, in the main, Lange (Commentary on Luke; but see his Life of Christ, vol. vi., p. 178, for a different view), Owen, Scott, Henry, Bloomfield, Trench, E. N. Kirk. How diverse are the interpretations of this parable is seen in the fact that the master has been taken by different authors respectively to represent God (Alford), mammon (Lange, Life of Christ), the Romans (Schliermacher), the devil (Olshausen); and the unjust steward has been regarded as a type of the Christian (authorities given above), Christ (Unger), the Pharisees (Vitringa), Judas Iscariot (Bertholdt), Paul (Theophylact), and Pontius Pilate.

† Luke xii., 16–21. See an admirable exposition of this parable in Sermons by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, vol. ii., p. 425.

Jesus makes in Perea, as in Galilee, the incidents that are going on about him the texts of his discourses. Observing, at a dinner-party at which he is an invited guest, a contention for the seats of honor, he takes occasion to say that the true way to seek honor is always to take stations lower than we are entitled to; then others will interfere to confer a higher place. Honors sought are short lived. Honors conferred unsought, last.

He seizes the same occasion to inculcate the true principles of Christian hospitality. There is no generosity, he says, in inviting those who will invite you to their homes in return.* There is none, let us add, in that system of ceremonial calling in which accounts are kept with the accuracy of the banker, and repaid upon mercantile principles in the course of the year. To call as Onesiphorus did upon Paul† is true, genuine Christian courtesy. How to use our homes and our tables in the spirit of a truly Christian love is a lesson which Christ's disciples have not yet learned. He who should undertake to practice on the precept of Christ—invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, would certainly be condemned for his oddity.

Christ sets very clearly before his Perean congregations the necessity of self-denial. There is no lack of enthusiasm. But so-called religious enthusiasm is of no value if it does not stand the test of self-sacrifice. It is easier to shout for Christ than to suffer for him. Sometimes Jesus seems even almost rudely to rebuff his quondam followers. He urges upon them to stop, to consider, to count the cost before they pledge themselves to his service.‡ This necessity of self-sacrifice is strikingly illustrated by an incident, the true meaning of which has been sometimes missed by a failure to consider the peculiar circumstances of the case.

A young man, attracted by the character and doctrines of Jesus, came to him and requested permission to join his Church. He was of noble birth. He was very wealthy. He

* Luke xiv., 7–14. † 2 Tim. i., 16, 17. ‡ See Luke xiv., 25–35.

was a man of exemplary character and of warm enthusiasms. He had been a dutiful son and an upright citizen. He was very much in earnest. He came running to Jesus, kneeled at his feet, and addressed him as "Good Master." He was quite ready, that is, to accept him as his Rabbi. It is not quite so clear that he was prepared to recognize in him the divine Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus tried the depth of his faith in this respect by a test question. "Why," said he, "callest thou me good? There is none good but one—God?" To this question the young man made no reply.

Jesus was nevertheless strongly attracted to him. But to enter his discipleship there had been from the first one condition—forsake all and follow me. In that little Church it was absolutely essential that no member should be bound by any ties to the earth; for its internal harmony, quite essential that there should be no distinctions based on wealth or family. Jesus offered him admission to his band on this condition: "Go," said he, "sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come and follow me." This demand was very different from that of the mediæval hierarchy, which said, Sell that thou hast and give to the Church. Jesus simply demanded of this candidate that he share with his companions their privations, their poverty, and their faith in God. He laid on him no other cross than that which had been voluntarily assumed by all his disciples, who had left their all to follow Jesus. But it was too much for the rich young noble, and he went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. Thus Christ exemplified, in part, the meaning of his counsel: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." The door is open to all, but it is entered by none without a struggle.*

At the same time, to his own disciples Jesus promised abundant recompense in the future. To the incredulous people it must surely have seemed strange to hear this Galilean

* Matt. xix., 16–26; Mark x., 17–27; Luke xviii., 18–27.

Rabbi, who had not a shelter for his head, nor in his community a single man of wealth, promising houses, and lands, and office, and honors to his faithful followers. "Every one," he said, "that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."* He was careful to explain, however, that this would not be given upon any principle of mercantile recompense. Fidelity, whenever and wherever exercised, would receive its reward. This he illustrated by a parable taken from the common country life of Perea.

A landholder, he said, went out into the market-place, in the early morning, to hire laborers, and agreed with them for a penny a day.† Afterward, about nine o'clock, again at noon, and again at three, he went out. Other laborers had meanwhile assembled waiting for work, and he engaged them. Finally, at five o'clock in the afternoon, he found still some others there, and he sent them to labor with their fellows. When at last he came to settle with them, he paid them all alike. The first murmured at what they deemed the unequal compensation. He replied that, since he paid them adequately for their service, they had no cause to complain because he chose to pay the others an equal amount for a less arduous service.‡

The early days of Christ were full of trial. Those who in the early morning of Christianity went to work in God's vineyard, had indeed the heat and labor of the day to endure. But they who, in this eleventh hour of the world, accept the Master's proffer, "Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you," if they are as faithful in their day and generation, will receive an equal meed of praise. There are saints of the nineteenth century as well as of the first, and God will give unto these last even as unto them.

* Matt. xix., 29.

† A denarius—that is, about fifteen cents of our money

‡ Matt. xx., 1–16.

But he who idles a lifetime in the market-place to accept the Gospel-call at the sunset hour of his life, can take no encouragement from this story, unless to the question, which will surely be addressed to him in the judgment day, "Why stood ye here all the day idle?" he is able to reply, "Because no man hired me."

This ministry in Perea was not a purely personal one. In Galilee, with its limited territory, its concentrated population, its few cities, Jesus appointed twelve to preach the Gospel in the towns and villages. In Perea, with its larger area, its more numerous cities, and its more scattered population, he gave a similar commission to seventy. They were endowed with the same supernatural powers. They were to depend wholly on the hospitality of the people. They were to preach the same Gospel, "The kingdom of God is at hand." They were to bear the same solemn testimony against whatsoever city rejected in them their Lord. In Perea Jew and Gentile were inextricably intermixed. The largest cities were Roman in construction and in character. The disciples were better acquainted than they were in Galilee with the principles of the kingdom they were to proclaim. Their ministry was not, therefore, limited as was that of their predecessors. They were not forbidden from entering into Gentile cities, or passing the borders of the contiguous district of Samaria. Unlike the twelve, they were, too, for the most part, heralds, whose chief business it was to precede their Lord, announce his coming, and awaken the expectations of the people for his personal ministry.*

Throughout this ministry Jesus was involved in the same controversy with the ceremonialism of his age which embittered all his life. The Pharisees of Perea found as little to commend in him as did the Pharisees of Galilee. His repu-

* For the commission of the seventy, see Luke x., 1–24. The fact that Luke alone gives this commission, and that our account of the Perean ministry is derived chiefly from him, leads me to place it in this period, though its chronological order is uncertain.

tation was not among the hierarchs. They watched him for occasions of accusation, proffered him hospitality only as a ruse to entrap him, and openly derided his teachings.*

In Perea as in Judea, the controversy between Jesus and Pharisaism commences upon the Sabbath question. Jesus repeats his testimony to the liberty of God's glorious rest-day. He does not disown the Sabbath obligation. He does nothing to relax it. But he teaches emphatically that it is a day for deeds of mercy. By miracles of healing at least twice repeated, once in the synagogue, once in a private house, he repeats the doctrine that he has already taught in Galilee, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." Here, as there, in every rencounter, Jesus is victor. The common people appreciate his illustrations, drawn from real life, and applaud his doctrines and his deeds. The Pharisees are enraged because they are humbled.†

In order better to bring him into disrepute with the common people, they assume the position of disciples, and ask him for instruction. But their questions are those of the dishonest skeptic. They ask not for information, but to baffle and perplex. Such is the question which they address to him concerning divorce.

As we have already had occasion to indicate, the laws regulating the marriage relation were fearfully lax in the Orient. Wedlock was no indissoluble tie. No legal proceedings were needed to dissolve it. The husband had simply to write a bill of divorce, and dismiss his wife from the house. In that bill he was not even obliged to state the grounds on which he acted. "He that desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatsoever," writes Josephus‡—and many such cases arise among men—"let him in writing give assurance that he will never use her as his wife any more, for by these means she will be at liberty to marry another husband." The Mosaic statute indeed provided that the husband could only

* Luke xiv., 1; xvi., 14.

† Luke xiii., 10–17; xiv., 1–6.

‡ Josephus, Antiquities, iv., 8, § 23.

put away his wife in case he "found some uncleanness in her."* But under that statute he was the supreme judge. From his decision there was no appeal. The gravest discussions had taken place, too, among the Jewish doctors as to the meaning of the word "uncleanness." The school of Hillel gave to it the utmost latitude. That a woman appeared in public with unveiled face, that she burned her husband's food in cooking, even that she ceased to please his capricious fancy,† was gravely asserted to be a sufficient ground of separation. In the eyes of these Jewish theologians marriage was not meant to be permanent. It lasted only during the pleasure of the husband.

The divorce laws of Greece and Rome were very similar. Cicero dismissed Terentia after thirty years of married life. Cato the younger divorced his wife that he might give her to a friend.

The Pharisees proposed to Jesus the question whether a man might put away his wife for every cause. Jesus replied with an emphatic negative. He accepted neither the teachings of Schammai nor those of Hillel. He denied that even the statutes of Moses were conclusive. He referred his questioners back to the first marriage in Eden; declared that God, by the very constitution of the race as male and female, had ordained marriage; asserted that one cause only could justify in the eyes of God the dissolution of the marriage tie, viz., a violation of the marriage oath. At the same time, he explained that the laws of Moses were not always those of a pure morality. The state can not enforce the ideal by its statutes; and Moses, regulating the conduct of a rude and barbarous nature, was compelled to make allowance for the spirit of the age and the passions of the people, and establish no higher rule of law than the average sentiment of the community would enforce.‡

The question thus addressed to Jesus had a political as well

* Deut. xxiv., 1–4.

† Ante chap. xiv., p. 188.

‡ Matt. xix., 1–12; Mark x., 1–12.

as a moral significance. John the Baptist had a little while before suffered death for rebuking the licentiousness of Herod Antipas. The Pharisees, having thus secured Jesus's implied indorsement of that rebuke, endeavored to silence him by threats of the tetrarch's enmity. Under pretense of friendship, they warned him that Herod had designs upon his life. But Jesus perceived their purpose. He replied with dignified severity that it could not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. He was not thus to be swerved from the path he had chosen.

Thus meeting at every step the invincible enmity of his foes, Jesus illustrated in his own person the truth of his aphorism, that he had come, not to bring peace, but a sword.

Among the common people, on the other hand, Jesus's ministry is attended in Perea with scarcely less popularity than in Galilee. The publicans and sinners draw near to hear him. Wherever he goes his way is thronged. For the most part the poor are his followers; but now and then, as we have seen, his Gospel reaches the hearts of the noble and the rich. There is that in him which touches the hearts of mothers, and draws their children to him. He not only loves children, the children love him; and when, despite the opposition of his disciples, the mothers bring their little ones to him for his blessing, he is not content merely to give it, but he takes them in his arms tenderly.*

Thus passed away the winter months in a ministry of mercy, pursued unwaveringly, despite obloquy and obstacle. It might perhaps have lasted until the Passover; but it was interrupted by an urgent message from Christ's friends at Bethany. Lazarus was dangerously ill. His sisters sent in haste for Jesus. After a brief delay, he prepared, notwithstanding the dangers which would environ him there, to return to Judea.

* See Luke xiii., 17; xiv., 25; xv., 1; Matt. xix., 13–15; Mark x., 13–16; Luke xviii., 15–17.

CHAPTER XXVI.

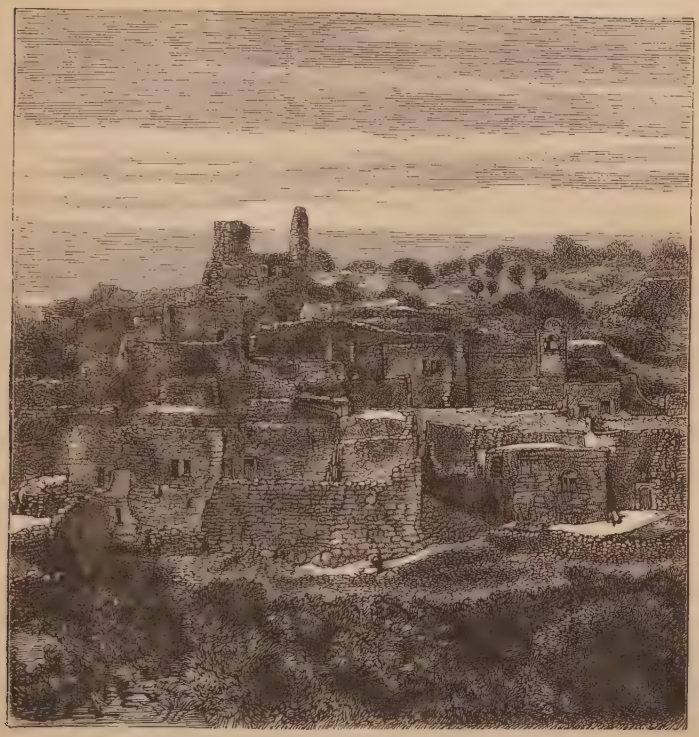
BETHANY AND EPHRAIM.*

ABOUT two miles east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho, still lie the ruins of the little hamlet of Bethany. Almost without a history, the village is forever sacred to the Christian heart as the chosen home of Jesus during his tempestuous life in Judea. Embowered in fruity vegetation that gave it its name, "The House of Dates," and shut out from the busy city by the mountainous wall of Olivet, on whose eastern slope it lies, it was doubtless once, though it be not now, "the perfection of retirement and repose," "of seclusion and lovely peace."†

Here was the house of Martha, and Mary, and their brother Lazarus. They were a family of wealth and social distinction; owned their house; had their family tomb in their garden, as did only the wealthier classes; esteemed three hundred dollars' worth of ointment not too costly a token of honor to pay to Jesus.‡ Pharisees in faith, they belonged to the more enlightened and liberal of that party. They possessed many distinguished friends among that class in Jerusalem. But neither party friendships nor party prejudices were able to keep them from Christ. How and where they first learned of him we do not know. How far Lazarus accepted him does not appear. But the sisters openly enrolled

* John xi.; Luke xi., 1–13; xviii., 1–8, 31–34; Matt. xx., 17–19; Mark x., 32–34. † Bonar, quoted in Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Bethany.

‡ A penny (*i. e.*, a denarius) a day was the ordinary wages of a laboring man. Allowing but a dollar a day as the wages of labor now, would fix the value of the box of ointment at the price mentioned in the text.



BETHANY.

themselves among his disciples. Twice, at least, they made entertainments for him. During his last stay at Jerusalem, just before his crucifixion, when the Pharisees were plotting his destruction, and the city was not safe for him, they received him nightly to their house.

Much has been said, and truthfully, of Christ's friendship for publicans and sinners. He went in unto them and ate with them. He never, so far as we know, declined their invitations; never, certainly, because they were not of his sect or social standing. Yet this was not because he was insensitive. It was not because he voluntarily chose such for his congenial companions. He did not disesteem wealth, and refined and

social culture. When his work was over, he sought his rest in the home of Martha and Mary.

There are indications that it was a true home. Sweeter than the fragrance of its garden flowers was the aroma of love that filled this quiet home circle. Richer than its wealth were its heart treasures. These sisters and their brother were tenderly attached to each other. Their commingled affections flowed out unselfishly toward Jesus. The quiet simplicity of their love, and the willing service of their hands, unambitious of honors in his expected kingdom, drew Jesus to them. He loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. The sacred quiet of their home made it a place always dear to him.

The family had already known bitter affliction. The mother was dead—perhaps long dead. For years, how many appears not, these sisters had known the sad meaning of a motherless home. The father had been stricken with that most dreadful of all diseases, leprosy.* With inexpressible solicitude the sisters had watched its gradual developments. Bitterly had they fought against the dread conviction deepening in their mind. Reluctantly had they at length acknowledged what they long strove to conceal, first from themselves, then from all others. The priest of God had pronounced the curse of God upon him. Society had echoed this solemn malediction. The funeral service had been read over his yet living frame, and he had gone forth from his home an outcast, to be seen and known no more. Worse than dead; for never, to their ears, from the desert where he must hereafter hide himself, would come back the word when death, the only physician that could now relieve, released him from his living entombment. And Martha, and Mary, and their brother Lazarus were left an orphaned family—alone.

On Lazarus these sorrowful sisters thenceforth lavished the whole wealth of their womanly affections. To them he was in the place of father, son, brother, husband. Their only

* Matt. xxvi., 6; Mark xiv., 3.

brother, he was the stay of the house. By him alone could the family name be preserved and perpetuated. A younger brother, he had been the object of their almost mother's care —had received an almost mother's love. When sickness laid its hand upon him their hearts thrilled with peculiar solicitude. The very depth of their love added poignancy to their fears. They sent in haste to Jesus for succor. If, as is probable, he was now at the ford of Bethabara, he was less than a day's journey distant; but disease outstripped their messenger; before word reached Jesus, Lazarus was dead.

When he returned he brought not Jesus with him. Instead, he brought an enigmatical reply. This disease, Jesus said, is not unto death, but for the glory of God. The facts seemed to belie the message. Lazarus was already dead. Of this contradiction the sisters' perplexed faith could make nothing. Anxiously they awaited Christ's coming—anxiously, but in vain. He who was quick to answer every other call, seemed indifferent to theirs.

Day deepened into night, and night dawned into day again, and still he came not. Friends flocked from the neighboring city to offer them unavailing words of comfort, but he who was the consolation of Israel tarried. In the warm climate of Palestine the funeral could not be long delayed. The body was wrapped in its burial garments and consigned to the tomb, and all was over. It is not difficult, alas! to portray, in imagination, the darkness which settled over that home, which has enveloped so many others. The broken-hearted sisters returned to their desolate fireside. At every footfall on the walk, at every opening of the door, they started in a strange half hope of greeting the one who never opened that door without warm welcome while he lived—a hope instantly crushed back into despair. Memories of the past came crowding up to the wearied heart, surcharged with thoughts of grief which it was unable to dismiss. Bitter thoughts would spring up, unbidden, against the God who seemed to follow them only with cruel wound-

ing; thoughts instantly rebuked, cast out with indignation, but only to return again; blasphemous thoughts; hateful, yet irrepressible hints of the Evil One; echoes of the old advice, "Curse God and die." All the hateful breath of public mourning environed them. Friends and neighbors came flocking in. Some brought goodish words, and repeated, parrot-like, hateful admonitions, from which the sorrow-stricken hearts turned sick away; and some came, curious gazers, to look upon the dead, and to lift the curtain that hides from every eye the heart's holy of holies, and watch the sacrifice offered up there, and go forth to gossip of it all; and some for politeness' sake, less to fulfill the claims of friendship than the requirements of society; and some, a very few, touched with real sympathy, striving to share that heart's burden which never can be shared, and speaking more of consolation by a tear, a pressure of the hand, the utter silence of a sympathetic heart, than others by their many words. So

"The night
Fell upon Bethany—and morn—and noon.
And comforters and mourners went their way,
And death stayed on! They had been oft alone,
When Lazarus had followed Christ to hear
His teachings in Jerusalem; but this
Was more than solitude. The silence now
Was void of expectation. Something felt
Always before, and loved without a name—
Joy from the very air, hope from the opening door,
Welcome and life from off the very walls—
Seemed gone; and in the chamber where he lay
There was a fearful and unbreathing hush,
Stiller than night's last hour."*

And still Christ tarried—strangest mystery, bitterest grief of all.

Oh! how this grief still repeats itself. How often, despite our agonizing prayer for succor, Christ delays his coming, until at length, to the distraught soul, he seems to be indifferent and irresponsive to human woe.

* Willis's Sacred Poems, Lazarus and Mary, p. 66.

When at length he arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had already been dead four days. Even then Jesus did not enter the village. Possibly it was not safe for him to do so on account of the Pharisees. More probably the scenes of formal mourning going on in the house were repulsive to him. He sent word to the sisters that he had come. Martha went out immediately to meet him, "but Mary sat still in the house." Of tenderer, though not perhaps warmer heart; of more susceptible, though not perhaps truer love, Mary, whose most joyous hours had been those of repose, was now utterly broken-hearted. To her there seemed nothing left worth living for. Even the name of Jesus had not at first power to draw her from her grief.

How many a Mary, overburdened by an unutterable grief, thus yields to it and sits still in the house, at first oblivious of even the Master's coming!

The first greeting which Martha extended to Jesus was one of gentle reproach: "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." His first words of consolation awakened no hope in her: "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha and Mary shared the faith, though not the spirit of Pharisaism. They held the fundamental article of that faith—immortality. They believed that death was a long sleep, and looked forward with strong assurance to a future day of final resurrection.

But this Pharisaic creed afforded as little comfort as the like doctrine which still too often supplants the Christian faith concerning death. Hope can not borrow for present grief from so distant a future. Jesus disclaimed this cheerless doctrine of a present sleep and a future awakening: "Whoso liveth and believeth in me," said he, "shall never die."

Life never ceases its pulsations. The soul does not go into chrysalis. The dead are the truly living. God's ministers of mercy, the departed, are our guardian angels. The air is full of their unseen forms. As of old time, the hori-

zon is crowded with these angelic hosts that are round all them that fear the Lord, and it only needs some prophet's touch upon our eyes to give us glimpses of them.

To Martha this was strange doctrine. She knew not what to make of it. She believed in Jesus, however—believed, despite the trial of her faith, in his truth and love. Less by his words than by his presence, a strange though unreasoning hope was awakened in her. She sent for her sister: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

To all that sit still in the very abandonment of grief, these words are evermore repeated. By his participation in our sufferings and our death, Christ has come near to all that sit under the shadow of a great grief. Gently he calls them to come unto him for rest.

In haste Mary rose to go out to Jesus. The mourners who surrounded her thought she sought the privacy of the grave to weep there. Such sorrow ought to be sacred from intrusion; but then, as now, many understood not this sacredness of sorrow. They followed her to the outskirts of the village. Here Jesus awaited her. His presence but intensified her grief. All the past came up before her. She cast herself at his feet. She repeated the greeting of her sister, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Oh this "if." How it recurs in our hours of grief to torment us. As little do we as Mary understand that our tears are for the glory of God; that there are no mishaps; that life has no "if."

This reproach was all the more bitter because it was the gentle reproach of a still loving and confiding heart. The sensitive sympathies of Jesus felt at this moment the anguish which he was so soon to cure. In this scene of weeping his prophetic spirit saw portrayed the like anguish of thousands of desolated homes, and myriads of like pierced and broken hearts. In the feeble faith of even a disciple so appreciative as Mary, he saw reflected the faltering faith of his universal discipleship withered with the first touch of frost.

For the moment he seemed to share the weakness of the sisters' sorrow with them. He gave to this reproach no answer but that of his own tears.

That Jesus should have wept at a grave whose inmate he was so soon to recall to life, at sorrow he was so soon to turn to joy, has been a perplexity to many who have endeavored to harmonize it with a theory rather than with the facts of human experience. They have forgotten that sympathy shares present woe, regardless of future alleviation; forgotten that these tears are but the expression of a life-long sympathy; forgotten that Jesus, who from the beginning saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied, was nevertheless, from the cradle to the grave, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

The tomb of Palestine was a cave cut by nature or by hand in the solid rock. A stone rolled against the door guarded the corpse from beasts of prey. The family tomb was often in the family garden. It seems to have been so in this case. The cave in which Lazarus was entombed was sunk in the rock. Steps led down into it. A stone lay upon the surface covering the entrance. Jesus directed this stone to be lifted up. Martha remonstrated. She imagined Jesus desired to take a last look at the remains. She reminded him that corruption had already commenced. Jesus replied by reminding her of his previous declaration: "Said I not unto thee," said he, "that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" To his persistence they yielded. The stone was removed. The group of mourners gathered with Jesus and his disciples about the reopened tomb. At every such new approach to the chamber of death the tears of sorrow flow afresh. It was mid-winter. The brown earth and naked trees added to the desolation of the scene.

But, though the way was open, Jesus did not essay to enter the tomb. Instead, he raised his eyes to heaven in a simple but sublime prayer of thanksgiving to his Father and his God. The moment was one of intense awe. A strange ex-

pectancy hushed for the instant the sobs of grief. This prayer was uttered in the softened tones of devout communion. Then, with a loud voice, he addressed the slumbering dead,

"Lazarus, come forth!"

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin."

With a joy which even the inspired pen of John has not ventured to describe, the sisters received to life again their brother; with awe-inspired faith, the curious Jews looked on him who thus proved himself indeed the Resurrection and the Life; while, as on a previous occasion, Jesus checked the too great revulsion of feeling by a practical direction—"Loose him and let him go."

It must be conceded that a narrative so marvelous requires the strongest testimony to support it. It is equally certain that the circumstances of the case preclude the possibility of mistake. The reality of this resurrection scene can only be denied by those who are prepared to accuse Jesus of imposition or John of falsification. It is narrated by one who claims to have been an eye-witness. He could not have been *mistaken* as to the material facts. Those facts are incapable of interpretation upon any hypothesis which denies the supernatural power of Jesus and asserts his common honesty. If Lazarus were not dead, the sisters must have known it. If Jesus, without supernatural powers, expected to summon him from the tomb, he must have shared their knowledge. In other words, the death, the burial, the mourning, the tears of the sorrowing sisters, the sympathy of the Savior, the protest of Martha, the persistence of Christ, were only well-acted parts in a religious imposture. And to this sorry conclusion the rationalism of Renan conducts him. Whom in one chapter he reverences as the Son of God, he depicts in another as an Oriental mountebank. He demands the reverence of the nineteenth century for one whom, if his tale were true, the nineteenth century would send to prison.

This miracle did nothing to abate the skepticism of the priesthood, or to diminish their hostility to Jesus. It produced directly the contrary effect, and from the scene of this wondrous act of love he was obliged to flee a second time for his life. With his disciples, he retreated from Bethany to the little village of Ephraim.

The location of this obscure hamlet is now unknown. No other reliable clew to its site is afforded to us than the declaration of John, that it was near the wilderness. Here he remained till the Passover. His ministry during this period is involved in the same obscurity. It is not unreasonable to surmise that he occupied this season of retirement, as that in Northern Galilee, with special instructions to his disciples. Among these was probably the Lord's Prayer. It certainly was afforded them about this time.

Christ was praying in a certain place. The prayer of the Jews was almost wholly ritualistic. The disciples came to Jesus and asked him to teach them how to pray. They probably expected him to give them a new ritual. Instead, in a very short and simple form, as sublime as it is simple, he gave them an illustration of those principles which should underlie all true prayer.*

To Jesus, God is less judge or king than father. Gathered about him, the whole human race is but a single family. No vast but illimitable and incomprehensible spirit, pervading all space but recognized in none, the God whom Christ portrays is conceived as personified and dwelling in the heavens. Thus the Christian, in the title "*Our Father in heaven*," is taught to recognize at once the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of a personal God.

In every thing, with thanksgiving, we are to make known our requests unto him. His presence we are to approach with neither servile awe nor easy familiarity, but with filial reverence; our first petition, "*Hallowed be thy name.*"

He who recognizes the disorder which sin has introduced

* Luke xi., 1–4; Matt. vi., 9–13; ante chap. xvii., p. 242, note.

into the world will desire, above every thing else, the re-establishment of peace in the re-establishment of God's authority. Thus the key-note to all Christian prayer is the cry of Christ in Gethsemane, "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.*" This oft-repeated phrase is more significant than we think. It is often a prayer for the baptism and cup of Christ, from which we shrink when they are presented to us.

From God comes all our sustenance. This, like the manna of the old time, must be gathered fresh every day. The lamp must be continually fed with oil, or it will go out.* In the petition, "*Give us day by day our daily bread,*" the Christian recognizes not only this, but also the truth that he lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The poet has said of Satan,

> "Since God suffers him to be,
> He, too, is God's minister,
> And labors for some good
> By us not understood."†

Even if this be deemed an exaggeration, yet Christian faith recognizes that our heavenly Father regulates the temptations which assail us, and provides always a deliverance. He that trusts in God's promise may be sure that God will not suffer him to be tempted above that he is able, but will, with every temptation, also make a way to escape, that he may be able to bear it; and he alone is secure who, honestly avoiding sources of spiritual danger, himself asks of his Father, "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*" Only he is able to stand in the evil day who thus puts on the whole armor of God.

Still he will be conscious of transgressions, despite his prayer and watching. We can never rightfully come to God without feeling our need of divine forgiveness, nor entreat it without exercising toward others that charity which we implore for ourselves. The most solemn prayer the Christian utters

* Matt. xxv., 1–13. † Longfellow's Golden Legend, Epilogue.

is that which is too often a malediction: "*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*"

Finally, all faith in the efficacy of prayer, in the providing, guiding, forgiving, and redeeming grace of God, rests in the belief that life is neither a tangled skein—tangled in the inextricable mazes of chance—nor an outlying province of hell, ruled by the Evil One, but that veritably *God's is the kingdom*, of which the world is truly a part—*God's the power*, whose purposes of grace neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, can ever countervail, and therefore *God's alone shall be all the glory.*

Such are the seed-thoughts of this prayer, which, nevertheless, is incapable of true interpretation except by the Christian heart, whose sincere utterance it becomes by spiritual adoption.

If Jesus by this prayer seems to sanction the use of forms of devotion—a usage universal in the Church from its earliest ages, and for which there is the highest authority, both in the written word of God and the unwritten wants of the heart—he carefully guards against the dangers of formalism in devotion, into which such a usage too quickly degenerates. He had before cautioned his disciples against vain repetitions in prayer. By two parables he teaches that there is a repetition, child of an earnest heart, that is not vain, and that, under the new dispensation as under the old, there is virtue in wrestling with God in prayer.

In the Orient it is the custom to travel late at night, for coolness' sake. There are no inns, in the modern sense of the term. The traveler depends on the hospitality of the people, as still with us in border states and sparsely-settled districts. Such a traveler arrives late at night at the house of a friend; it is dark; the door is shut and bolted; the master of the house has retired, and is already asleep; the would-be guest, wearied and hungry, arouses him with difficulty. Called from his bed, and only half awake, the host is little inclined to ex-

ercise the rites of hospitality. He surlily bids his friend go away. I have gone to bed, he says, and can not get up and get you a supper. The answer seems decisive; but the traveler does not accept it so; he has no idea of sleeping out-of-doors, and going supperless to his cold bed. He continues his knocking, and the host, unable to sleep, yields at length to the importunity of his friend what he would not yield to the claims of friendship merely.

It is only to those who so hunger and thirst after righteousness that they will not be denied that the promise is made that they "shall be filled."

Moses had appointed, as we have already seen, local tribunals for the trial of subordinate causes, and the punishment of lesser crimes and misdemeanors.* In accordance with Roman policy, which left as far as possible the manners and customs of each province undisturbed, these were still maintained. In every town was this inferior court. These judges, in the degeneracy of the age, had already become tainted with that corruption which at the present time almost universally characterizes the Oriental judge. Christ drew from the life the picture of such a one. A disciple of the Sadducaic philosophy, he was restrained by no fear of God's future judgments. A creature, perhaps, of the Roman court, he was utterly regardless of the opinion of his fellow-townsmen. It seems idle to hope for justice from such a man. A poor widow applies at his tribunal for protection from an enemy, but, being without means to enforce her claim by a liberal bribe, she can at first get no hearing. Not discouraged, however, she persists in her petition. The judge never sits down in the gate — the Oriental court-room — that this woman does not appear before him. At length, wearied out with her importunities, he grants her tardy justice, barely to be rid of the trouble she inflicts upon him. If, says Christ, the very worst of men thus yields a hearing at last to the importu-

* Deut. xvi., 18; Matt. v., 22–26; Jahn's Archæology, § 243, 245; Josephus, Antiquities, iv., 8, § 14.

nate, shall not God, the judge of all the earth, give to the wronged and suffering a hearing? His justice seems to delay; he seems to hear long and patiently; but he will avenge them speedily.*

Thus passed the closing weeks of winter. Mingled with these private instructions were hours of prayer, preparation for Christ's approaching sacrifice. At length the Passover drew nigh. To the amazement of the disciples, Jesus proposed to go up to the feast. Already an outlaw in Judea, condemned alike by the mob and the court, it seemed to them that he was but going to certain death. Nor did his prophecies tend to reassure their fears; for, in language more unmistakable than any he had before employed, he disclosed to them that vision of his betrayal and his crucifixion, which, after all, none but he could see;† for to him the result of this last attempt on Judaism was not uncertain. As from a mountain-top one sees spread out before him the valley he is about to enter, Jesus saw the road that was leading him to the tomb. His disciples' feet faltered. His purpose was never firmer. With the night of weeping in Gethsemane, the betraying kiss of Judas, the terrified flight of his disciples, the palace of Caiaphas, the judgment-hall of Pilate, the march to Golgotha, and the cruel crucifixion full in view; with the blaspheming denials of Peter, the fierce outcries of the mob, the bitter lamentations of the weeping women, and the taunts of soldier, priest, and people ringing in his ears, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

* Luke xviii., 1–8.

† Luke xviii., 31–34; Matt. xx., 17–19; Mark x., 32–34.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TRIUMPH.*

GREATEST of all the festivals of festal Judaism, the most joyous and the most solemn of them all was that of the Passover. It was the birthday of the nation. On this day Israel celebrated its divine emancipation. The story of that emancipation, as romantic as it is marvelous, is familiar to every Christianly instructed child. A world-wide interest gathers about that night, when, after a long series of judgments and mercies, of miracles that, like the mysterious cloud, looked with angry face toward Egypt, and a bright and shining one toward Israel, the long-delayed hour of deliverance drew near—deliverance of a nation of despised slaves from a nation of proud and haughty task-masters. How the Lord himself hasted through the sleeping land; how he entered every house of Egypt, from the palace to the hut; how in every one he left a dead body and breaking hearts; how every believing Jew, warned of death's coming, warded off the blow by the blood of a lamb marked on the lintel of the door; how, thus defended, the Israelites watched through the long night waiting for the promised summons, and eating their hastily-prepared meal of unrisen bread as a preparation for their long, long journey—this has been so often rehearsed in song and story that it needs no new rehearsal here.†

Every year the Jews gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate by a feast of unleavened bread and a new sacrifice of a paschal lamb this hour of divine deliverance, and keep alive in

* Matt. xx., 17–34; xxi., 1–22; Mark xi., 1–26; Luke xviii., 31–43; xix; John xii., 12–50.

† Exod. xi.; xii.

the hearts of their children the traditions of their ancestors. It was the Fourth of July of Judaism, with this difference, that it afforded no occasion for the deification of their ancient heroes; for godless pæans in honor of liberty; for oratorical panegyrics on the memory of Moses. God was the founder of their commonwealth. Their praise was paid to God alone.

No true patriot suffered himself to be absent from the Feast of the Passover. If we could believe the Oriental figures of Josephus, three millions sometimes gathered about the Temple during this week of prayer and praise.* The walls of Jerusalem inclosed an area of about one square mile. That a population three times that of New York city could have been crowded into a space less than that of some of its upper wards, overtaxes our credulity. But the Holy City was doubtless crowded to its utmost. Oriental hospitality outdid itself. Every house became a caravanserai. Every door was thrown open to the strangers. The court-yards were filled. The roofs of the houses became bed-chambers. The city overflowed its walls, and the surrounding hills were dotted with the tented encampments, gathering as near the Temple of Jehovah as the city walls permitted; while from every house and every tent arose, morning and evening, praise to Jehovah, "whose mercy endureth forever."

The month of March had come, and with it the Passover. The roads were filled with companies of pilgrims marching with their wives and children to the city, where alone the feast of unleavened bread could be observed. Nature itself, emancipated from the brief winter, seemed, with its dress of fresh green, and its bursting buds and blossoms, to share the festivities of the nation.

Among all these traveling companies none was more joyous than that which thronged, unbidden, about the Galilean Rabbi. His road lay through Jericho. That city was indeed what its name indicates, a city of fragrance. The plain which constituted its environs was an oasis of green, in the

* Josephus, Wars of the Jews, ii., 14, § 3; iv., 9, § 3.

midst of high and barren limestone mountains. The spring which Elisha miraculously cured* made the earth a marvel of fertility. It was literally embowered in fragrant vegetation. It was a favored and favorite city of antiquity. The income from its palm and balsam was thought by Antony to be a present worthy of being conferred upon his royal mistress, Cleopatra. It was chosen as the site of a royal residence by Herod the Great, who built here a palace, and met here his death. The tax-gatherers of the Jordan valley, whose fertility the frosts of winter never checked, had here their headquarters. The priests of Jerusalem found underneath its shade-trees a quiet retreat when their priestly labors in the Temple at Jerusalem were over. Thus commerce and religion met here without mingling. It was a city of priests and publicans.

Among these latter was Zaccheus, a chief among publicans; that is, he was a farmer of the public revenues, an officer answering to our district tax-collector. He belonged to an ancient Jewish family. His name held an honorable place among the archives of the period of the Restoration.† He had acquired great wealth in his calling; and Rome had done what she could to make him respectable in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen by constituting him one of the equestrian order.

But society closed her doors against him. The priest that passed him on the street gathered his flowing robes together that he might not suffer the accidental pollution of his touch. The children of his Jewish neighbors would not play with his children in the street. Rarely did a Rabbi darken his door. Despite his wealth, his family, his Gentile nobility, he was an outcast.

For the aristocracy of Judaism was an aristocracy of religious patriotism. Society was exclusive, as where is it not? The shibboleth which admitted to it could never be pronounced by one who suffered Gentile contamination. In the

* 2 Kings ii., 19–22. † Neh. vii., 14.

Jewish estimation, this publican had not maintained the sanctity of his name.* He was no true Zaccheus. His wealth was ill gotten. His Gentile rank was a stigma of disgrace, the price paid by Rome for his apostasy. In no city of Palestine were social lines drawn more sharply than in Jericho. Those lines Zaccheus, with all his wealth, could never pass.

This man had heard of Jesus, and desired to see him. But he was small of stature, and could not get at him for the throng. He was bandied to and fro by the crowd. Democracy often delights thus to avenge itself upon its dignitaries. To get a better view of the coming king of the Jews, he ran forward to climb a neighboring tree. That the crowd hugely enjoyed the nimble climbing of this Roman knight, and made him the butt of their rude jokes, is as certain as that human nature was the same in the first century that it is in the nineteenth. That something more than idle curiosity prompted him to face this derision is at least a reasonable surmise. Christ seems to have recognized his allegiance in the act. He seized the opportunity to rebuke the exclusiveness of "best society." He singled out this man, called him by name, and publicly announced his purpose to be his guest. He passed by the Rabbis and priests of Judaism, and passed the night at Zaccheus's house.

That Christ preached to publicans and sinners excited little comment. That on his way to assume his kingdom he should choose a publican for his companion and entertainer, shocked the Pharisaic sensibilities. They murmured, saying that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. They were as little able to comprehend this act as were the aristocracy of Europe the spirit that led Peter the Great, Frederick of Prussia, and Napoleon the First frequently to disregard the conventional distinctions of society. "A man's a man for a' that," the lesson that Jesus taught the Jews in Jericho, the world has not yet learned, despite the lapse of ages. To eat with social sinners is scarcely less pardonable

* The word Zaccheus means pure.

in the "best society" of Christendom in the nineteenth century than it was in that of Judaism in the first. Social democracy is the last, as it is the ripest form of democracy.

At the same time, Jesus exemplified the power of a true social life. It may well be doubted whether any sermon would have affected Zaccheus as did the simple fact of this visit of Jesus. What the social penalties of Judaism could not accomplish, the proffered love of Jesus wrought. Zaccheus confessed the errors of his life, promised reform, and assured the genuineness of his repentance by his acts. A tax-gatherer, he had been the willing instrument of Rome in impoverishing the community. He promised, so far as he could ascertain the victims of his extortion, to restore to them fourfold. But such an exacter can not accurately retrace his steps. He promised in addition, therefore, to give one half his goods to feed the poor, whose substance had contributed to his ill-gotten wealth. To Jesus such practical acts of restitution were the best evidences of a genuine repentance. He declared that by this promise Zaccheus constituted himself a true child of Abraham. He was now, in very truth, Zaccheus once more.*

The following day Jesus resumed his journey. The distance from Jericho to Jerusalem is about sixteen miles. It is easily traversed in a day. The journey of Jesus and his disciples was a triumphal procession. The Galilean pilgrims to the feast, afraid of being polluted by passing through Samaria, usually made a detour east of the Jordan, recrossed the river at Bethabara, and, ascending the western hills of the Jordan valley, passed through Jericho on their way to the Passover. Thus Jesus was accompanied by the caravans of his own countrymen, proud of their Rabbi, and doubly ready, since the resurrection of Lazarus, to do him honor. The people, who had murmured because he went in to eat with a publican, admired the conversion he had wrought. They could not fully comprehend the genuineness of Zac-

* Luke xix., 1–10.

cheus's repentance. But they had no difficulty in appreciating the generosity of his gifts and the completeness of his restitution. He had pledged one half of his fortune to the poor; it is indicated that he had already commenced its distribution. The common people rightly considered Christ the real author of their good fortune. And if the gift awakened in them any thing like the enthusiasm which a generous baksheesh arouses in an Oriental rabble now, it is not difficult to comprehend the kind of homage they paid to Jesus in return for his royal provision. The very beggars in the street caught the popular enthusiasm, and hailed him as the "Son of David." As he went out of the city, attracted by the cry of two such who were blind, he stopped, hushed the tumult of the accompanying crowd, called the unfortunates to him, and, with a word, gave them back their sight.* Such an act intensified the popular feeling. The people praised not less the condescension of their king than his miraculous power. They were certain that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. They believed that Jesus was at last going up to Jerusalem to assume his royal rights as king of the Jewish nation.†

Christ in vain endeavored to check their enthusiasm by a parable drawn from contemporaneous history. Archelaus, though appointed to the succession in Judea by the will of his father, Herod the Great, had been obliged, before assuming his throne, to leave his province and journey up to Rome, there to secure from the senate their confirmation of his appointment. Some of the citizens had sent thither a delegation to protest against this confirmation, but in vain. And Archelaus had now returned, and had not been slow to take the vengeance of a Herod on his foes. To this fact, fresh in the popular recollection, Jesus referred.

The kingdom of heaven, he said, was as one going thus into a far country, and leaving servants and subordinates to carry

* Matt. xx., 29–34; Mark x., 46–52; Luke xviii., 35–43.

† Luke xix., 11.

on the affairs of government during his absence. The Lord is about thus to leave his kingdom. He will, to human vision, be absent from the earth. Many even would begin to scoffingly cry out, "Where is the promise of his coming?" But he will return again, his throne and sceptre assured to him, to summon to account his professed servants, to administer justice to all idlers, and to punish those who have availed themselves of his seeming absence to plot treason against his authority.*

The people, however, were in nowise inclined to receive such teaching. Belief in a temporal kingdom was too firmly inwrought into the Jewish mind to be eradicated by a single sermon.

To his own disciples Christ had just, on the eve of this journey, spoken even more clearly. He had declared in detail what should be the circumstances of his death; that he should be betrayed by one of his own disciples, arrested by the chiefs of his own nation, condemned by their supreme tribunal, delivered, king as he was, to the hated Gentiles, mocked, scourged, spit upon by them, and finally put to death to rise again. Such warnings cast a momentary gloom over the party. But it lasted but for a moment. If we consider how coming events still cast their shadows before, and yet how little accustomed we are to read their prophecies; how few are prepared, for example, for the long-expected death of their friends; how surprised at last the American people were in 1861 at the first alarm of war, notwithstanding for years violent men had threatened and wise men had prophesied it, it will seem less surprising to us that the disciples, living in an atmosphere of Oriental enthusiasm, perceiving the supernatural powers of their master, and unable to comprehend his still more supernatural love, should be unable to understand the meaning of these prophecies, notwithstanding they seem so plain to us after their fulfillment.

Indeed, there is that in Christ's own teaching which

* Luke xix., 12–27.

strengthened their erroneous faith. In his conferences with them at Ephraim he had told them that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. He had promised them that, if they left houses, lands, friends, they should have a hundred fold in this life, besides life eternal in the world to come.* He had already conferred upon them the miraculous powers which he exercised himself. He had long since promised them the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whose gates they were to open and close at will.† These promises we interpret as parables. History gives the prophecies of his death a literal interpretation. Let us not wonder that, in the full tide of popular enthusiasm, they reversed the process, and interpreted his warnings as parables which they understood not, his promises as assurances to be immediately and literally fulfilled. How little the disciples appreciated the future—how still less, therefore, the common people did so, is indicated by a single and significant incident.

In the caravan with the twelve disciples was Salome, the mother of James and John. The few scattered hints of her character which the evangelists afford indicate that she was a woman of courageous, ambitious, almost masculine character. Though she had heard Jesus's parable, she little understood its import. Though certainly her sons, and perhaps she herself, had heard his distincter prophecies, they did not comprehend their meaning. The kingdom they had waited for so long seemed now close at hand. Salome had accompanied Jesus ever since his early ministry. Of her wealth—for the family was one of means—she had contributed generously to his support, and to that of his little Church. Her sons had been the first to join their fortunes to his own, and for that purpose had left not only a competence and a comfortable calling, but home and friends as well. She now seized the opportunity to demand for them distinguished honors in the new era. "Grant," said she, "that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on

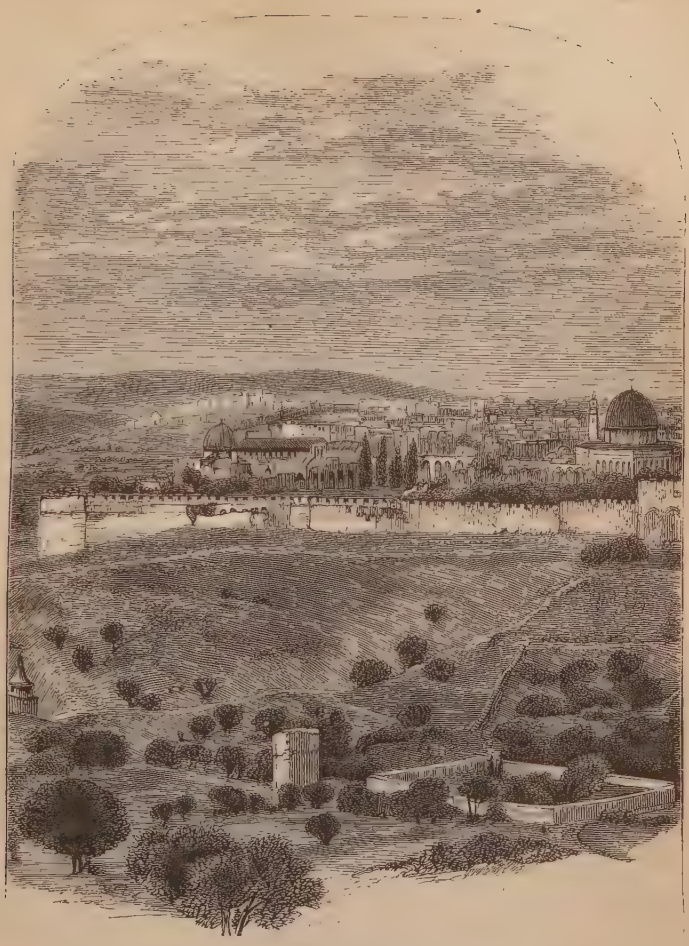
* Matt. xix., 27–29. † Matt. x., 1; xvi., 19.

thy left, in thy kingdom." Nor is it at all likely that she understood Christ's enigmatical reply, "Ye know not what ye ask," until she saw, in the hour when by crucifixion he entered into his kingdom, the two malefactors occupying the very places she had selected for her children.*

Thus the band, augmenting as it marched, passed along the wild and rocky road that leads from Jericho to Jerusalem. It was night before they reached the little village of Bethany. The city was already fast filling up with strangers; the tents of many a caravan already whitened the surrounding hills. The home of Martha, and Mary, and their brother Lazarus, claimed the privilege of affording Jesus and his twelve disciples a generous hospitality. He yielded to their claim. It was Friday night. An imaginary line drawn about the city, half a mile distant from its walls, constituted its Sabbath environs. No Jew could pass that line upon that sacred day on peril of severest penalties. Bethany lay without that imaginary line. The morrow, therefore, was spent in comparative seclusion with congenial friends. Close to the bustle of a great and now overcrowded city, no ripple of its life reached for that day his ear. It was a day of quiet preparation for a week of activity, of conflict, and of anguish, to end in a victory purchased only by his death.

Jerusalem is literally a city set on a hill. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion," sang its poet-founder.† It is built on a promontory of rock that juts out from the table-land of Judea. Deep but narrow gorges separate it from the surrounding hills. On the west and south, the Valley of Hinnom lies between Zion and the neighboring highlands. On the east, between Moriah and the Mount of Olives, the Brook Kedron sings softly to itself in the valley which it christens with its name. Only on the north does the city adjoin the mountain range of which it is a part. Its uplifted towers are twenty-five hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea, the blue of whose waves

* Matt. xx., 20–27; Mark x., 35–45. † Psalm xlviii., 2.



JERUSALEM.

is discernible from a neighboring eminence; thirty-six hundred feet above the valley of the Jordan, whose waters empty into the Dead Sea eighteen miles to the eastward.

This city is really two. Valleys on either side environ it. A third valley, penetrating its heart, divides its rock foundation into two hills, and the city itself into an upper and low-

er town. The east twin, one hundred feet higher than its neighbor, overlooks it. This is the Mount Zion of the Bible, the site of Solomon's royal palace. The western hill, smaller but more precipitous, afforded by its flat platform a fitting site for the temple he erected to Jehovah. From its battlements the spectator looked down a giddy height into the valley of the Kedron, far below. Across this valley, and shutting in Jerusalem on the east from all view of the Jordan, rose the Mount of Olives, now barren, but then crowned with herbage, and covered with the gardens which supplied the city with its summer fruits. From its peaks one still looks east into the basin of the Dead Sea, down a descent so precipitous that what is really a hard day's journey seems but an easy hour's walk. Westward he looks down into the very heart of all that remains of the Holy City, with its narrow streets, its overhanging houses, its ruined walls and towers, and its Mohammedan Mosque of Omar on the site of its ancient Temple.

Leaving the city by the Temple Gate, crossing the deep valley of the Kedron by an arched and elevated bridge, passing beneath the shade of olive groves, and through the midst of aromatic gardens, leaving Gethsemane to the left, climbing the mount that overlooked the city and the neighboring gorge, and descending on the other side into the valley, where are still found the few remains that mark the site of ancient Bethany, the well-traveled road to Jericho wound its way, the chosen path of all Jewish pilgrims from the north and east. Thus every morning of the Passion Week, Jesus, approaching the Holy City from Bethany, crossed the Mount of Olives, and, entering Jerusalem near its Temple Gate, passed at once into the outer courts, thronged with devout worshipers and curious lookers-on; thus every evening, when his work was done, while others went to their city homes, he returned the way he came, perhaps to the village that entertained him, perhaps to some of the Galilean encampments that now whitened the groves of the Mount of Olives itself.

This digression seemed necessary in order to understand the events of the week on which we are now about to enter.

The Sabbath, as we have said, Jesus spent in seclusion at Bethany. Meanwhile, however, the rumor had run through the city that Jesus and Lazarus were both coming up to the Passover; and the early sun of the first day of the week saw a throng streaming out of the eastern gate, and along the road to Jericho, toward the village where they were staying. At the same time, Jesus, with the twelve, started from the village for the Holy City. The disciples had procured for their Master a mule, probably from a Galilean friend—from some one, at all events, who knew Jesus, and who recognized him as his Lord. One of the disciples took off his burnoose and made out of it a simple saddle for his Master. The trappings were not ornate, but they were those of a genuine love. To his followers it seemed clear that the hour of the inauguration of Christ's kingdom had at last come. Pilgrims from Galilee, whose caravans filled the road, and whose encampments lined it, extemporized a procession in honor of the Rabbi whose fame reflected glory on their province. Citizens of Bethany, who bare witness to the resurrection of their fellow-townsman, vied with them in their homage. As they marched they chanted some verses of an ancient psalm.* In the wildness of their enthusiasm, some ran before, plucked the olive boughs from neighboring trees, and carpeted the way; others threw off their outer garments and strewed them in Jesus's path, that they might receive the consecration of his shadow falling on them. Some conservative Pharisees objected, as some of their descendants still object to all religious excitement, and demanded that Christ rebuke this unseemly enthusiasm. Jesus replied that if the people were silent the very stones would cry out. The prophet Habakkuk had six hundred and fifty years before foretold the day when the stones should cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber should answer it.† Possibly Jesus referred to this

* Psalm cxviii., 26.

† Habbakkuk ii., 11.

prophecy, and to the hour of its fulfillment, when, because Jerusalem had no songs of welcome for its Lord, the stones of its falling towers, and walls, and Temple courts cried out in wrathful tones the judgments of God against her.

To Jesus this hour of the city's destruction was already at hand. He shared not the enthusiasm which he would not rebuke. As this procession passed the apex of the hill, he beheld the city, with its white walls glistening in the morning sun, its palace roofs of red cedar, its innumerable towers of massive masonry, and its streets thronged with citizens and pilgrims; beheld, too, the tented encampments of strangers which surrounded it. In that moment he saw, as in a vision, the day so rapidly drawing near when the tents of the Roman legions would environ these walls, when the throngs that crowded its streets would battle with one another for a crust of bread, when these white walls would crumble to the dust beneath the Gentile artillery, and when the blood of priest and people would bring to a final end the whole system of Jewish sacrifice. And the tears welled to his eyes, and the soliloquy was wrung from his heart, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace."

But they did not know. And with joy in the triumphs of the present, unconscious of the future, the gay caravan passed on, meeting its counterpart of curious ones coming from the city to see the Rabbi whose word was invincible over death; inspiring these their Judean comrades with their own enthusiasm; absorbing them in their own now doubled ranks; gathering constant additions as they marched along, as such crowds always do; and thus, with resounding psalms, and waving palm and olive branches, entering the city, perhaps, by the very gate where, five days later, Jesus went out to Golgotha, bleeding from the Gentile scourge, and sinking under the weight of his intolerable cross.*

* For account of this triumphal procession, see Matt. xxi., 1–11; Mark xi., 1–10; Luke xix., 29–44; John xii., 12–18.

Christ's road led straight to the Temple, and to the Temple he went. Its outer court was filled with the same company of traders which two years before he had expelled with indignation. Does this seem strange? Yet this phenomenon is perpetually repeated. Corruptions scourged by the whip of God from God's Church, return straightway again to plague it. Jesus, who had commenced his ministry by expelling these intruders from the Temple courts, could not brook them now in the hour of his seeming triumph, and a second time he drove them from the Church which they profaned.* The market-place he converted into a hospital. The courts dishonored by trade he consecrated to mercy. The miracles of love, which characterized his Galilean ministry, he repeated at Jerusalem. The blind and the lame came to him and he healed them.† The sermons which the people had flocked to hear by the shores of Tiberias he repeated here, and with the same results. The Temple court was thronged with attentive listeners.‡ The same testimony they had borne in Galilee they repeated in Judea. They were astonished at the power of his teaching.§

Some Gentiles, who had come to look curiously on at this festival, whose true significance they understood not, were struck by this sudden burst of popular enthusiasm, and sought, through some of Christ's disciples, an introduction to the Rabbi who thus moved the entire city. Greek philosophy was eclectic. Her scholars, traveling over the then known world, sought to add something to their stock of philosophy from the religious faiths of every nation. But Christ had no contribution to make to the cosmopolitan philosophy of the schools of Athens. He declined the interview; at the same time, he accepted the incident as prophetic of the hour when the glory of the Lord should be seen in Israel, and Gentiles

* Matt. xxi., 12, 13, and parallel passages. It is not clear whether this expulsion of the traders took place on the first or second day of the week. Matthew and Luke indicate the former, Mark the latter.

† Matt. xxi., 14. ‡ Luke xix., 48. § Mark xi., 18.

should come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.*

In the Jewish as in the Roman Catholic service, children participated in the ministrations of the altar. Even these children of the Temple, sons of the priestly families, and in training for the priestly order, felt the national heart-beat, and with their voices swelled the popular chorus of "Hosannah to the Son of David," much to the indignation of their churchly fathers; for, then as now, there was a Church conservatism which objected to Christian enthusiasm in children's hearts and lives, and disbelieved that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God ordaineth praise. Let those who deny to little children the privilege of joining Christ's disciples in proclaiming praise to his name ponder his rebuke of their ecclesiastical ancestors in the Temple.†

Thus Jesus passed Sunday and Monday. From earliest sunrise to the dusk of evening he was engaged in teaching the people the truths of the kingdom of God, and in healing their suffering and their sick. At night he retreated from the bustle of the city and the machinations of the priestly party to the Mount of Olives, or the home of his three friends in the village of Bethany.‡ The whole city pulsated with the excitement of his presence. The Temple courts were thronged with his audiences. They came early. They dispersed late. All Jerusalem was moved by the moral power of this single man. "The world is gone after him" was the testimony even of his foes.§

* Isa. lx., 2, 3; John xii., 20–36. † Matt. xxi., 15, 16.
‡ Mark xi., 11. § Matt. xxi., 10; Luke xix., 47, 48; John xii., 18, 19.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONFLICT.*

VERY great was the perplexity of the Sanhedrim. They had long since declared against this Galilean Rabbi; they had formally pronounced the sentence of excommunication against any who dared count themselves among his followers;† they had issued a public proclamation for his arrest;‡ they had even overawed members of their own council as wealthy and as influential as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; they had succeeded in driving him from the city by mob violence, and had fondly hoped he would never return; they had even thought to exile him from the country altogether by threatening him with the enmity of Herod Antipas; and now this outcast and alien marched into the city in triumph, welcomed by the people as their king, honored alike by Jew and Gentile, his praises sung in the very citadel of their worship by the very children of the altar. The heresies whose proclamation on the distant hills of Galilee they had with difficulty borne, he boldly preached in the very courts of the Temple; the miracles which they had scornfully demanded were wrought in the midst of their sacrificial processions; and a second time, by his expulsion of the traders, he openly rebuked, in the presence of the people, their corruptions.

And yet they dared not proceed to extreme measures.

The Judeans, indeed, for the most part, felt as little favor to Jesus as ever. The men who three months before took up stones to stone him, sat in scowling silence, biding their time.

* Matt. xxi., 23–xxv., 46; Mark xi., 27–xiii., 37; Luke xx.; xxi.
† John ix., 22. ‡ John xi., 57.

His friends were the Galileans; but of Galileans the city was full. They were a hardy and a violent race. Of impetuous and fiery disposition, they were ready, on a moment's provocation, to seize the sword to defend their honor or avenge their wrongs. Peter, whose impetuosity was at once his most charming virtue and his greatest weakness, was a fair type of Galilean character. More than once the blood of these Frenchmen of the Holy Land had reddened the streets of Jerusalem and the pavements of the Temple. The attempt to arrest their favorite would have been the signal for instant and violent resistance. At the first indications of an emeute the Roman guards would have swept down the narrow streets and into the Temple courts. Judean and Galilean would have fallen together beneath their swords. Jesus would have become a prisoner of Rome, and, since Rome looked with supreme indifference upon these religious strifes, would have been released almost as soon as arrested.

The later experience of Paul indicates the difficulties that hedged about the Sanhedrim.*

To turn the tide of popularity against Jesus, to check the enthusiasm of the Galileans, to stir up the prejudices of the Judeans, and to secure the sanction of the Roman procurator to the execution of the sentence already practically pronounced against Jesus, was the work which the priestly party had before itself. The history of the Passion Week is the history of their success. Every night they were in secret but informal session. The treachery of a professed friend, the worst passions and prejudices of an insensate mob, the prostitution of the forms of justice, and the fears of a time-server on the bench, were the instruments they employed.

Yet it is reasonably certain that these hierarchs could not have turned the current against Jesus. He deliberately turned it against himself. Literally he laid down his own life; no man took it from him.

Already Judaism was divided into those parties whose in-

* Acts xxi., 31–33.

ternecine strife added bitterness to their last and disastrous struggle against the Roman government. But, widely as they differed, in one respect they were agreed—in expecting emancipation from the Roman yoke, and the establishment of a new and world-wide kingdom, of which the Jewish nation should be the head. Jerusalem, not Rome, was to be the mistress of the world. The Galilean, too impetuous to be prudent, was with difficulty restrained from rushing to instant and hopeless rebellion against the imperial government. Insurrection after insurrection broke out in that turbulent province, only to be instantly quelled and cruelly punished by the invincible Roman. The Herodian trusted to political rather than military enginery for the accomplishment of the same purpose, and saw in the dynasty of the wily and unscrupulous Herod a hope for the restoration of the throne of David. The Pharisee, too prudent to join the hare-brained insurrections of a Judas or a Sadoc—too earnestly opposed to all combinations with Gentiles to have faith in the schemes of the Herodians, waited with patient but superstitious faith for a Messiah, before whose breath the hosts of the heathen would melt as the hosts of Sennacherib had done, and whose single arm, vieing in strength with that of Samson, would as easily disperse their heathen foes by the hundreds and the thousands. Thus all agreed in expecting the re-establishment of a Judaic kingdom, and the coronation, as emperor of the world, of a Jewish king.

It was because the Galileans believed that Jesus was this long-expected king that they welcomed him so warmly.

This dream of empire was one hopelessly wild and singularly visionary. Rome was a nation of soldiers. Her standing army numbered nearly half a million of men.* The whole military force of Judaism proved no match for the four legions of Titus† forty years later. In no respect, either, would the condition of the world have been improved by a change

* See, for account of the Roman army at a little later period, Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. i., chap. i.

† About thirty thousand men.

of masters. Rome was a better queen than Jerusalem would have been; Pilate was a better administrator than Caiaphas.

Yet Judaism might have conquered Rome.

Rome, strong in military power, was weak in moral ideas. She had no earnest faith, no strong purpose, no central truths. Her heart was weak, her muscles only strong. In her palmiest days her gods had been poetic deifications of human virtues; but those days were already past, and the era was fast approaching when a corrupt and parasitical senate would vote emperors to be gods while they lived, whom history assigns among incarnate fiends since their death. Religion no longer satisfied the heart of the common people or the intellect of the wise, and it was sustained, not by any genuine reverence for itself, but because it was regarded by its rulers as a state necessity.

The moral life of Rome shared the corruptions of its effete religious faith. Bribery was universal and unconcealed. In the courts—no longer courts of justice—gold was the plea of the wealthy suitor; the passions of the populace the defense of the poor. Chastity and temperance were the subjects of common satire. The drama was supplanted by gladiatorial combats, and feasting and revelry, continued through many days and nights, became banquets of death.

> "Nothing is left—nothing for future times
> To add to the full catalogue of crimes.
> The baffled sons must feel the same desires,
> And act the same follies as their sires.
> Vice has attained its zenith."

So Juvenal portrays the life of Rome less than three quarters of a century later than the period of which we write.

Here, then, was Rome's weakest point, and in these respects Judaism was strong. The one provoked the derision of the wise by presenting for their adoration a host of sensual gods and goddesses; the other demanded their reverence for one supreme and spiritual Jehovah. The one deduced the will of the gods by the tricks of the soothsayer from the chance

flight of birds, or the study of the entrails of the sacrificial victim; the other pointed to the sublime enactments of Mount Sinai, the plain precepts of the prophets, and the moral maxims of the book of Proverbs. The one, regarding religion as a political instrument, left it to be regulated for the nation by the senate; the other, regarding it as an individual life, forbade any one from interfering between the soul and its God. The moral life of the one people, corrupted by its very religious faith, was rotten with self-indulgence and licentiousness; the moral life of the other, despite the corruptions of its Church and priesthood, was preserved comparatively free from the excesses of Oriental animalism by its faith in God, in the sanctions of his Word, and in the immortal destinies of the human soul.

Thus, then, Judaism might have conquered Rome, not by the sword, but by its ideas. Thus already, in some measure, Greece subjugated her own conquerors. Thus Christianity, slain in the person of its founder by Roman decree, became mistress itself of her who claimed to be the mistress of the world.

This was the conquest to which Jesus invited his nation. The time had now come for him to make this purpose clear. By a spontaneous effusion of popular feeling he had been proclaimed in the Holy City itself the Son of David. A considerable portion of the nation had thus practically acknowledged allegiance to him. By miracles wrought in the Temple courts, and witnessed to by his bitterest foes, he had justified the title. Their allegiance he now must test. The chimerical dream of military conquest he must rudely dispel, to substitute therefor the more substantial prospect of moral victory. This he must do with a full consciousness of the inevitable result. Jewish bigotry would never surrender its life-long expectations.

To put aside popular enthusiasm is far harder than to decline a crown. To turn the homage of a people into execrations loud and deep may well test the courage of the most

heroic. This Jesus deliberately did, with the full consciousness of all the bitter consequences to himself.

Tuesday, the fourth day of April, A.D. 34,* was by far the most eventful in the life of Christ—may almost be said to be the most eventful in the history of mankind. On the evening of that day, and for that day's utterances, not on the evening of his more formal trial, nor for any word of blasphemy, Jesus was condemned to die.

When he first entered the Temple on that eventful morning, it was evident that systematic plans had been formed to silence him, if possible, effectually and forever. A common animosity fused all parties. Old feuds were forgotten, old party lines obliterated. Pharisee and Sadducee, Herodian, scribe, and priest, made common cause against him.† They joined in the crowd which surrounded Jesus. They assumed to be his disciples.‡ Mingling their questions with those of honest inquirers after truth, they endeavored to entrap him into answers that should arouse popular prejudice, or embroil him with the Roman government. They plied him with flatteries, and, praising his boldness and independence, sought to cozen him.§ The whole range of thought they traversed, and questioned him eagerly concerning their political duties as citizens, concerning practical ethics, and concerning the most abstruse problems of abstract theology.

Hitherto Jesus had disregarded all such dishonest inquiries of dishonest skeptics. He had either openly refused, or successfully evaded a direct answer. This morning he pursued a different course. He suffered himself to be catechized. He answered, with one exception, every question. It was his last day of public teaching. He sought to draw out the hierarchy, to make plain to all the people the antagonism between him and them, and to warn the populace against the priests.

* That is, assuming Christ to have been born A.D. 1. If the more modern hypothesis, that he was born four years earlier, be accepted, this should be, of course, A.D. 30. See chronological note at the beginning of the book.

† Mark xi., 27; xii., 13, 28. ‡ Luke xx., 20.

§ Matt. xxii., 16; Mark xii., 14; Luke xx., 21.

Refusing to interfere with questions of political administration, Jesus nevertheless declared that, so long as the people enjoyed the benefits of the Roman government—employed its currency, for example—they must yield it an ungrudging support. Since they accepted Cæsar as their emperor by using his coin, they must render to him obedience so long as his laws did not interfere with the higher duty of rendering to God the things that are God's. Refusing to participate in the puerile imaginings which filled the Rabbinical books concerning the conditions of the future state, he at once rebuked the materialistic ideas of Pharisaic theology by declaring, in effect, that flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God, while he demonstrated to the Sadducees the doctrine of the resurrection by a reference to the Pentateuch, the only part of the Old Testament Scriptures which they universally and unquestionably accepted. Declining to take part in the casuistry of his day concerning the relative importance of the various laws of the ancient commonwealth, he comprised the whole law in one word—love; and by a single sentence sweeping away the religion of mere creeds, ceremonies, transient emotions, external moralities, and godless philanthropy, that he might substitute that of a genuine heart-life, he married piety and humanity in the wedlock of a true religion by the declaration that the whole law and prophets are only the amplification and application of the combined commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.*

He no longer seemed to avoid controversy. He seemed even to provoke it. He became catechist in turn; asked, as they had asked him, not to ascertain their views, but to confound and silence them; and, much to their indignation, succeeded.† Warnings and prophecies of coming doom, which

* Matt. xxii., 15–40; Mark xii., 12–34; Luke xx., 20–40.

† Matt. xxi., 24–26; xxii., 42–46; Mark xi., 29–33; xii., 35–37; Luke xx., 3–7, 41–44.

heretofore had been generally confined to confidential discourses with his disciples, he now publicly repeated. He declared that the religion of the Pharisees was one of profession and pretense; that the publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before them; that the Jewish nation was no longer the favored people of God; that its privileges and prerogatives would be taken from it; that it was a nation of murderers; that the present generation would, by slaying the Son of God, fulfill the measure of the iniquity of their fathers; and that, so far from becoming the mistress of mankind, the stone which they refused would grind them to powder, the open door to the feast of God's love would be forever closed against them, the avenging sword of God would utterly destroy them, and their Holy City would be burned with fire.*

Nothing are the common people so quick to resent as the act of one who dispels their dream of national glory. No one so quickly arouses their passions as a prophet of evil.

These denunciations were at first couched under the guise of parables. At length that guise was thrown off. The infinite patience of Christ seemed to have been exhausted. Endurance ceased to be a virtue. For the moment he appeared to be no longer the Savior, but the Judge of mankind, and to have already ascended his judgment throne, that he might denounce the sure penalties of God upon a people whose piety was but a poor pretense to conceal lives of selfishness and sin. Literature may be searched in vain for philippics more terrible than those which constitute Christ's last public address in the Temple at Jerusalem; and we can well conceive the awe with which the people, transfixed by the spell of his more than mortal eloquence, listened to these terrible denunciations of their religious leaders—denunciations enforced by an air and manner that spoke unmistakably the fires of pent-up indignation which even the calm soul of Jesus could restrain no longer, and yet that ended at the last in an outcry of infinite pathos, of divine pity and compassion.

* Matt. xxi., 28–46; xxii., 1–13; Mark xii., 1–12; Luke xx., 9–19.

This commingled denunciation and lament constituted Christ's farewell to Judaism—the culmination of his ministry, the first word of whose earliest public and recorded discourse had been "Blessed," and to the graciousness of whose first sermons all had borne glad testimony.

Yet it almost seems as though Jesus were still reluctant to take a final leave of the city which, despite its accumulated sins, he so ardently loved.

As the sun sank behind the hills of the distant horizon, he sat with his twelve disciples on the Mount of Olives, looking down upon Jerusalem, while in sombre colors he painted the terrible picture of its destruction, so near at hand, and with a few prophetic words carried their minds forward with his own to the yet more dread occasion when all nations and all peoples would be called before God's judgment throne; and in words, perhaps the most solemn and weighty of all his ministry, warned his disciples—as he still warns us—to be ready for that awful scene, the day and the hour whereof no man knoweth—no; not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

These words must have produced a profound effect on all who heard them. They were the knell of all his hopes to Judas Iscariot.

* Matt. xxiv.; xxv.; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TREACHERY.*

SCRIPTURE scholars have never been able satisfactorily to unravel the character of Judas Iscariot. It is a profound enigma. For three years he had followed the Master. He had displayed to no eye except that of Jesus any indication of his future treachery. He had traversed, with the other disciples, the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the mountains of the Jaulan, the coasts of the Mediterranean, the slopes of Hermon. He had participated with them in his Master's triumphs and his Master's trials. With Peter, he had left his all to follow Christ, whatever that all may have been. He had borne unwearicdly, so far as history records, their privations and their toils. He had received, with them, ordination to preach the Gospel, and with them had been endowed with supernatural gifts. He had healed the blind, cured the sick, cast out devils, done many wonderful works. He had been admitted, with them, to their Teacher's confidences, sat with Jesus at the table, looked up into his loving eye, felt, unabashed, its glances read the soul.

But when, at last, the trial day was come, he forswore his allegiance, separated himself from his old-time companions, betrayed the confidence of him whom he had not only professed to love and cherish, but whom he had really followed through evil as through good report, and purchased for himself an imperishable infamy, as the very type of treachery, through all time and among all peoples; and this for a sum scarcely sufficient to purchase the meanest slave in Pales-

* Matt. xxvi., 6–16; Mark xiv., 3–11; Luke xxii., 3–6; John xii., 2–8.

tine*—a sum, probably, far less than he had often borne in the common treasury of the little company. When at last his work was done, and he saw the Master whom he had so long followed about to be borne to his cruel death, he gave every evidence of being overwhelmed with shame and remorse, bore solemn testimony to the purity of Jesus's life and character, demanded his release from the priests to whom he had betrayed him, and finding, as, alas! too often we find, that it was impossible to undo the evil he had done, cast contemptuously away the bribe that had been paid him, and, in an agony of mind unendurable, perished miserably by his own hand.

It is impossible to attribute his conduct simply to cupidity. It is impossible to doubt that his soul was the theatre of a tempest of conflicts and passions such as rarely visits any but strong natures. In endeavoring to trace the history of that soul-conflict with the slender information we possess, it will be necessary to rely somewhat upon surmise in lieu of well-established facts; for not one of the evangelists has made any attempt to analyze the character of Judas, and afford an explanation of the profound mystery which enshrouds his conduct and his motives.

Judas Iscariot, that is to say, Judas of Kerioth,† was a Judean—the only one among the twelve. This much his name indicates. The village of his birth, whose name distinguishes him from the other Judas of Galilean extraction, is a small town about thirty miles south of Jerusalem; rather we should have said it was, for only a few uninhabited ruins now remain to mark its probable location. He belonged, by birth and education, to the priestly party. If he was of a re-

* Thirty shekels. A shekel is equal to sixty cents of our money.—Robinson's Lexicon, art. Αργύριον. The price paid, therefore, was about eighteen dollars. A moderate allowance for a difference in value between this age and that would make it equivalent to from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty dollars of our currency.

† For different theories of the etymology, of which this is the most probable, see Smith's Bible Dictionary, art. Judas Iscariot.

ligious family at all, he was often at the Temple, and was taught from his earliest youth to feel a reverence for its sacrificial service which his Galilean contemporary was far from fully sharing. It may fairly be presumed that he possessed the religious prejudices and opinions of his own people. In that case, he was proud of his Jewish blood, and inherited from his ancestry the full measure of their bigotry, of intense, bitter, narrow-minded patriotism. The high-priest was vicegerent of God to him; the Temple was God's dwelling-place; Palestine was the land of promise. It is not a stretch of fancy to suppose that he shared with his Judean brethren in a geographical fancy which located Judea in the exact centre of the globe. It is not an unreasonable surmise that he participated with them in the almost universal prejudice which looked with religious rancor upon a heathen and a publican.

He certainly shared in their expectations of a temporal Messiah. In this he was supported by the universal faith of all Palestine. His dream was of a resuscitated nation, a revived theocracy, an hour when the Gentiles should bow beneath the sceptre of Judah. "In Judah God is known—his throne is there." This word of God, literally interpreted, was the assurance of his hope.

The brief glimpses we obtain of his life indicate that he was in essence a Jew—hard, sensuous, practical. He walked by sight. He believed in things he could see and handle. Spiritual glories were unsubstantial to him. There are clear indications that he shared, too, what may, without unjust opprobrium, be termed his nation's vice—avarice. The prospect of a throne, a kingdom, a chief place in the new empire, with its honors and emoluments, had strong attractions for him. From the very first he made himself treasurer of the new company. There are even indications that he was not always honest in the administration of his trust.* It is true, the treasury was not large; but the way to secure its

* John xii., 6.

keys in the hour of its triumph, was to obtain them in the hour of its feebleness.

Judas did not lack shrewdness.

What first led him to attach himself to Jesus it is not difficult to conjecture, though it must be confessed that it is a matter rather of conjecture than of positive historical information.

He had looked, with his nation, for the advent of a Messiah. Signs were not wanting that the time long prophesied was at hand. The wise men did not all dwell in the East. To these signs Judas was not blind; had he been, the preaching of John the Baptist might well have arrested his attention and excited his hopes. He believed, with many a Pharisee, that the kingdom of God was really at hand. By the earnestness of that preaching, too, his better nature may have been touched. He may have been among the Pharisees who came to John the Baptist, and who, for the time being, at least, believed. Thus worldly ambition and an awakened conscience may well have combined to make him watchful for the advent of the King of the Jews.

His name is not mentioned till after Christ's first visit to Jerusalem. The same miracles that convinced Nicodemus that John was a prophet sent from God, may have wrought a similar conviction in the mind of this Judean. He was not wanting in a certain kind of mental sagacity. Under the garb of this Galilean Rabbi he had the penetration to perceive his rare character and his extraordinary powers. Ambition, and that cunning which often attaches a political intriguer to an unpopular cause in the days of its unpopularity for the sake of the advantage which, to his far-sightedness, it promises in its certain future of triumph, did, perhaps, the rest. Does not the history of the anti-slavery movement in America afford some illustrations of a kindred cunning?

Yet it is impossible to believe that no higher motive actuated this Judean disciple; for it is impossible to think that Jesus would have added to his Church one utterly and hope-

lessly corrupt. His death attests that he was not without some appreciation of honor, some sense of shame. The preaching of Jesus had doubtless real power over him. He, perhaps, honestly enlisted in Jesus's service. The seed may have taken real root none the less that thorns so soon sprang up and choked it.

It is not difficult to trace, in imagination, the rest of his career.

So long as Christ preached only "the kingdom of God is at hand," so long Judas followed him with implicit faith in his Gospel. When the twelve were sent forth to repeat that message, he accepted the mission without hesitation, fulfilled it without faltering. His faith that he would soon share in the glories of that kingdom was the common faith of all. Peter, boasting of his fidelity, asked what he was to have therefor. John and James sought the first rank in the Messiah's nobility. Up to the last moment the twelve contended in unseemly strife for precedence at the table.

But when Christ refused the proffered crown at the plain of Bethsaida, Judas's faith was staggered. When Jesus told the people at Capernaum that it was only by his death he was to enter into his kingdom, Judas showed signs of disappointment that did not escape the sensitive heart of John.* When, in distincter language, Jesus prophesied his crucifixion, Judas, too guarded to utter the rebuke of Peter, shared the sentiments he was too secretive to express. When the rich young nobleman offered to join their band, Judas could ill comprehend the policy that would turn him away. When more than one like Nicodemus made overtures of secret alliance, Judas was restive under the rebuff that was administered to all who refused to confess Jesus before men. When Jesus uttered his first philippics against the Pharisees, Judas was among the first to instigate, if careful himself not to utter the caution, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended?" And his covetous nature and suspicious disposi-

* John vi., 64.

tion resented in secret every such utterance as the enigmatical sentence, "How hardly can a rich man enter the kingdom of God;" or that invective against worldly-mindedness veiled under the parable of the rich fool; or that yet more striking contrast between earthly and spiritual wealth which is afforded by the story of Dives and Lazarus. He thought, with Renan, that Jesus preached a gospel that savored too strongly of Ebionism. He had no ambition to be poor.*

Such, at least, we may well conceive to have been the effect of these teachings on his sordid soul.

Nor was it only his ambition that was crossed; his religious prejudices must also have been shocked. Judean by birth and education, the radical nature of Jesus's teaching offended him. He secretly revolted at the utterance which denounced the ablutions of the Pharisees, a ceremonial which the Jews had been taught to regard with reverence akin to that paid by the Romans to the mass. He was perplexed by his new Master's disregard of the Pharisaic Sabbath. He was impatient at what seemed to him the unnecessary disrespect to popular prejudice—the more impatient that those prejudices were his own. His reverence for the high-priest, the prelate of Judea, was wounded by the repeated rebukes which Jesus administered to the priestly party. His intense nationality rendered to him obnoxious the teachings of such parables as that of the good Samaritan, and such broad declarations as that the children of the kingdom would come from the north and the south, the east and the west, while the children of Abraham would be cast out.

Thus, if religious feeling combined with worldly ambition to draw him to Jesus, religious prejudice combined with a disappointed ambition to repel him.

Nothing is more deadly than a perverted conscience; and Judas had a conscience.

As the close of Christ's life drew on, the conflict in Judas's

* For indications that all the disciples were at least perplexed by these and kindred utterances, see Matt. xv., 12; xvi., 22; xix., 25.

soul became bitter and more marked. Jesus, stoned from the Temple, he was ready to desert; Jesus, thronged with attentive and admiring audiences, he was proud to acknowledge as his Lord. Jesus, prophesying of his shameful death, he had no ambition to follow to the cross; Jesus, promising to the twelve disciples the right to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, was a Messiah after his own heart. Jesus, exiled from Judea, seeking in Perea safety from the Sanhedrim, he thought a sorry king; Jesus, raising the dead Lazarus by a word, revived his faltering faith and stimulated his slumbering hopes. Jesus, sitting down at meat with the despised Zaccheus, outraged his Jewish sense of propriety; Jesus, riding in triumphal procession amid waving branches and popular songs of rejoicing, reflected a glory in whose lustre he was glad to shine. Jesus, rebuking the heresies of the Sadducees, his orthodox head commended; Jesus, denouncing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, his too worldly-wise heart condemned.

Christ's teachings on Tuesday put an end to this conflict. The kingdom of Jesus was not a Judaic kingdom. The vineyard was to be taken from Judah and given to worthier nations. Her house was to be left to her desolate. Of her walls, and bulwarks, and towers, whose praises David had so sweetly sung, not one stone was to be left upon another. In the revelations of that hour, the dream of this Judean vanished. He *seemed* to himself the victim of an unwarrantable delusion. He rehearsed in his mind the repeated promises of his Master. These turned to be Dead-Sea fruit in his grasp. He forgot the warnings and the interpretations which should have guarded him against his false hopes. He *was* the victim of an unwarrantable delusion, but it was that of his own sensuous imagination.

He is not the only one who, having put his hand to the plow, has drawn back, seeing how sharp a furrow it cut through the fair sward.

To draw back from a reformation is never easy. To aban-

don a failing cause; to return to Judaism because Christianity had no crown to offer—to return confessing the failure of his cause and empty-handed, was more than the sensitive ambition of Judas could endure. Sensitive we call his ambition. Two incidents of his life show it to have been so; one at the supper in Bethany, the other at the supper in Jerusalem.

Gradually, therefore, there had arisen, darkly and dimly, in his mind a project for returning not empty-handed. The damnable suggestion had been whispered to his cunning soul that the very difficulties of his position might be turned to the account of his ambition. For over two years the Judaic party had sought in vain the charmed life of this Galilean Rabbi. He that should destroy for Judaism this young Goliath that defied it, would he not receive the hosannas of victory from priest and from people? Already, in his imagination, he saw himself crowned by the party of his youth and the vote of the chief council. *This*, not the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, was the price his imagination offered him for the betrayal of his Lord.

He forgot that always the price of treachery is scorn—scorn heaviest from those who profit by it. So did Arnold. So does every traitor.

Little by little another element entered into the conflict going on within him—*revenge*. These dark thoughts, gradually as they had grown, carefully as they had been hidden beneath an almost impenetrable reserve, Jesus had read. He sometimes intimated in enigmas his knowledge of them. The Son of man, he said, will be betrayed.* The disciples looked on such occasions with wondering suspicion at each other; most of all, perhaps, at Judas, who was not a Galilean. These intimations galled him. His sensitive pride, keenly sensitive to praise and blame, made more of these suspicions than there really was, and widened the gulf already separating him from his companions. He writhed in angrier indignation because

* John vi., 70, 71; Matt. xvii., 22; xx., 18.

he felt their justice, and because, unuttered, he could not openly resent them.

Thus gradually Judas separated more and more from his companions. Thus gradually more and more his disappointed hopes and base ambitions shaped themselves into a treacherous purpose.

Such was his state of mind when a very simple incident crystallized his ill-defined design into an instant and well-defined resolve.

On the return of Jesus from Jerusalem, Tuesday evening, Martha and Mary made an entertainment for him; Judas, of course, was among the guests. Martha was a good housekeeper, and evidently prided herself on her housekeeping. The feast was worthy of the family and the occasion; but Judas, brooding over the problem how to withdraw without disgrace from following this uncrowned king, was in no mood for feasts. The supper was Martha's homage to Jesus. After the supper Mary offered hers. She opened a box of very valuable ointment. A little would have sufficed for any ordinary anointing, but none less than the whole sufficed for Mary's love. After anointing the head, she poured the balance upon Jesus's feet.

At another time Judas might have accepted such an act of homage. If it had followed the hour of Christ's triumphal procession, he might have recognized it as a tribute not unworthy to be paid to his king. But it followed a day that signified his final breach with Jesus—a day dark with its uttered foreboding to Jews and the Jewish nation—a day momentous with its prophecies of coming disaster. Judas forgot his careful reticence, and openly condemned the waste of such wholesale offerings. Even now he had the wisdom to conceal his displeasure beneath a pretended regard for the poor. He even succeeded in communicating his sentiments to some of the other disciples.*

Jesus instantly defended the womanly love that proffered

* Compare John xii., 5, with Matt. xxvi., 8.

him this homage, and somewhat sharply rebuked the rebuker. "Let her alone," he said. Then he added, with infinite pathos, "She hath done this to my burial." The rebuke was not severe. It was far less so than the one which Jesus had long before administered to Peter; but, with all his faults, an impulsive love was the key-note of Peter's character. Pride was the master passion of Judas's soul. Love accepts any rebuke. Pride submits to none.

Ill at ease, feeling as though these simple words had half unveiled his latent treachery to all the guests, morbidly fancying his own self-condemnation reflected in their faces, indignant at the real rebuke and the imaginary exposure, and receiving, in the allusion to Christ's burial, new confirmation of Christ's approaching defeat and death, Judas escaped at the earliest moment from the house, hastened to the city, sought some of the chief priests, and communicated to them his readiness to betray his former master.

Even in the excitement of that hour of evil ambition and dark revenge he did not forget his ruling passion. They agreed to pay him thirty shekels for his service. The die was cast, and Judas only awaited the opportunity for the fulfillment of his design.

That opportunity did not occur till Thursday evening.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE LAST SUPPER.*

BUT a few hours before Jesus's death he gathered his disciples for a familiar interview about the table of the paschal supper. This festal service he requested his friends to keep thereafter as a memorial, not of their national emancipation, but of his dying love. His simple request has converted this national birthday into the birthday of Christianity. This supper has become a permanent ordinance of the universal Church. It was carefully guarded against ever becoming a luxurious entertainment by the simplicity of the elements of which it consisted—bread and wine. Despite its simplicity, it is observed by different denominations in widely diverse ways. Some kneel around an altar; some sit in pews; a few gather at a table; none observe with accuracy the original form; and none, let us hope, are oblivious of its sacred spirit. It is repeated in the mass of the Romish and Greek churches; in the more simple yet solemn ritual of the Episcopalian; in the still simpler yet impressive service of the Nonconformists. Various conditions are attached by later tradition to its proper observance. These differ in different communions. In one, the participant must have united with the Church, accepting its doctrinal statements; in another, he must have been regularly immersed; in a third, he must have gone to confession, and received absolution. In nearly all, none but a regularly ordained minister may break the bread and pour the wine; none but a deacon pass them; in the Romish Church, none but a priest partake of the cup. In

* Matt. xxvi., 17–35; Mark xiv., 12–31; Luke xxii., 7–38; John xiii.–xvii.

the faith of a large proportion of Christ's professed disciples, a mystic change takes place in the bread and wine at the moment the administrator pronounces over them his prayer of blessing. To some it becomes veritable flesh and blood of Jesus. To others it receives a peculiar spiritual property, appreciable, not to the cold sense, but to the spiritual imagination. To yet others, who deny alike the real and the spiritual presence of the Lord in these emblems of his love, there is still something sacred in the tokens he has left—not merely for the associations which they awaken, but for themselves. To the priest it is a consecrated wafer; to the Protestant it is holy bread; while to priest and Protestant alike this supper is very generally accounted a rite that belongs exclusively to the Church, that binds its members together, that separates them from all who are not of their fold, and until lately—and still in some Christian denominations—a bond, not of communion between different bodies of Christ's believers, but a test that separates Christ's disciples, coworkers in a common field, and confessedly inspired by a common purpose.

In the perpetuation of this simple service in so many different forms, under so many different auspices, in so many different tongues, and through so many centuries, there is something sublime. Other services lose, by perpetual repetition, their sacredness, and are obliterated even from the memory of mankind. Forms, ceremonies, rituals, are revolutionized by the progress of human thought and the perpetual evolution of new ecclesiastical agencies; but the Lord's Supper is more sacredly enshrined to-day in the memory of mankind than ever before. Alike in the most costly cathedral, with its fretted vaults, its echoing aisles, its magnificent chorals, its priestly procession, and its solemn stillness and "dim religious light," and in the log cabin of the far-distant Western hamlet, with its bare rafters, its floor of earth, its wild, weird psalmody, and its music of sighing winds and singing birds drifting in through the open windows, this

bread and wine receives, though in far different method and in different measure, the homage of grateful and loving hearts.

For love never grows old, and the communion service is the memorial of an undying love.

Into the theological controversies which have grown up about this table, it is not the province of the historian to enter. With the interpretation of its spiritual meaning afforded by the Church, or even by the apostles themselves, we have in these pages nothing to do. Nor in drawing reverentially aside the ivy which loving hands have trained over the monument of Jesus's love, that we may gaze upon it as he framed and patterned it, do we mean to do dishonor to the hearts that have thus twined these later offerings about it. Our simple purpose is to recount the history of its origin.

That history will show that, whatever the Church has since made it, whatever Jesus's prophetic spirit may have intended it to become, in its origin it was a family, not a Church ordinance. The Church of Christ, indeed, was not called into existence till the feast of Pentecost, nearly two months later. It was not built till its foundations had been laid in the cross of Christ.

No mystic changes characterized these emblems in the hour when Jesus first pronounced his blessing on them. In veritable flesh and blood he sat before his disciples. His spiritual presence was felt in his words, and needed no other utterance. This bread, after, as before the blessing, was simple bread; this wine unaltered grape juice.

No ecclesiastic was appointed to administer it in future ages. In its inception it was, like the Passover which it supplanted, a family ordinance. Jesus, as the father of his little company, presided, and for its future celebration gave no other ordination than "Do this in remembrance of me."

For participating in its privileges, he prescribed absolutely no conditions except such as are involved in that simple sen-

tence. His disciples had united with no ecclesiastical organization. There is, as we have already said,* no adequate evidence that they had received Christian baptism. They certainly did not go to confessional. They received no other absolution than Christ's oracular and significant declaration, "Ye are clean; but not all." To unite in this supper, he prescribed but one condition—

Love!

And, finally, he can hardly be said to have prescribed this rite—if rite it can be called—as a law. Rather he vouchsafes it as a privilege. "Do this in remembrance of me" is a request rather than a command. Certainly it savors less of the language of obligation than the sentence "If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." The one service is laid aside by the almost universal consensus of the Christian Church; the other is best observed where its obligations are recognized as those of a loving remembrance.

To the institution of this memorial supper the course of our history now conducts us.

Wednesday and Thursday, Jesus did not go into Jerusalem. He knew the treachery of Judas, and perhaps purposely avoided the dangers with which it threatened him. He had earnestly desired to eat the Passover with his disciples.† After that he was ready to suffer all things.

This was to be eaten on Thursday evening.‡

* Chap. XVI., page 225, and notes. † Luke xxii., 15.

‡ There are few questions in Gospel harmony that have given Biblical critics more difficulty than the one respecting the time, or rather the occasion of the first celebration of the Lord's Supper. There is no doubt that it was partaken of on Thursday evening. The synoptists certainly indicate that this was the evening of the Jewish Passover. John, on the other hand, gives, at least to a casual reader, the impression that Friday was the Jewish Passover, and he makes, it will be remembered, no direct mention of the institution of the Lord's Supper. I have followed the order of the synoptists, as do Kitto, Smith, Robinson, Eddy, Newcome, Andrews, and apparently Lightfoot. This view is denied or doubted, on the other hand, by Pressensé, Milman, Ellicott, Townsend, Alford, and Neander. It is impossible to condense the results of the discussion, or even adequately to state the question, within the compass

When Moses had announced to the Israelites in Egypt that the hour of their deliverance drew nigh, he had commanded them to make preparation for a hasty midnight meal. They were to partake of it standing, their loins girt about, their feet sandaled, their bread unleavened, they themselves ready, on a moment's notice, for their long pilgrimage. By direction of God, he had converted this hasty supper into a perpetual ordinance. It was a family feast. It antedated the Church. The father on these occasions was the priest of his own household. He slew the lamb with his own hand. At evening he gathered his family about the table. Seldom less than ten or more than twenty sat down to the sacred service. Whether, ordinarily, the women of the household shared the feast with their brethren is uncertain. There are historical instances in which they seem to have done so.* The lamb, roasted whole, was placed at the head of the table, before the master of the house. Not a bone of the animal could be broken. Unleavened crackers constituted the only bread, unfermented wine the only beverage. A dish of bitter herbs and spiced sauce completed the food. The supper was a ritualistic service. The father was its administrator. He pronounced the blessing at the commencement of the meal; he dipped the bitter herbs in the sauce, and distributed them to the circle; he carved and passed the sacrificial lamb; he consecrated, first the bread, then the wine, by a prayer of blessing; and he made the whole service a text for a historical account of the nation's deliverance—an account which he sometimes amplified into a lengthy religious discourse. The singing of the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th Psalms closed the service.†

To partake of this supper Jesus had come to Jerusalem.

of a note, and I must refer the student to Andrews's Life of Christ, p. 423–430, and Robinson's Harmony of the Gospels, p. 196, note, for a statement of the reasons which have led me to the conclusion adopted in the text.

* 1 Sam. i., 7, 8; Luke ii., 41, 42.

† For an account of the original institution of this supper in the wilderness, see Exod. xii.

For this feast could only be celebrated in the Holy City; if not necessarily within its actual walls, at least within its Sabbath environs. Bethany, as we have said, lay beyond them, and at Bethany, therefore, Jesus could not properly observe the Passover.

It is true that times, and seasons, and places are unimportant in Christianity. But it was the Jewish feast that Jesus desired with his disciples to observe.

These facts must be borne in mind in order to understand the events which follow.

Every house in Jerusalem at this season threw open its doors. Every room became for the one evening a dining-hall. Jesus had experienced no difficulty in procuring a room for himself and friends. It was in an upper chamber. The other rooms were doubtless occupied by the host himself, or by some of his kinsfolk. Busy administering the supper to his own family, the host could not share in that of his guest. But, in truth, Christ desired for this evening to be alone with his disciples. Not even his own mother was of his circle.

The walk from Bethany to Jerusalem was a dry and dusty one. The unprotected feet needed washing when Jesus and his friends arrived at their host's door. This was the more necessary, since in Oriental fashion the disciples reclined at meat, and thus each guest rested almost on his neighbor's feet. It would have been the province of a servant to unloose the sandals and bathe the hot feet before the meal began; but Jesus and his disciples had no servants, and those of the house were busily engaged. The water and the basin were there, but no one to use them.

Jesus waited to see if any disciple would offer to perform this necessary service—waited till the table was set and the hour of the meal had arrived. Instantly the disciples began a singularly unseemly contention for the chief places at the table, at which, in accordance with Oriental rules of etiquette, every place was numbered, and guests were seated according to their rank. The company of Jesus was an absolute de-

mocracy. This question of rank was, therefore, one difficult to be settled.*

Jesus waited till this contention was ended and all had taken their places at the table. It was clear that cleanliness was less than social ambition to them all. Then he offered a rebuke as gentle as it was memorable. He rose from his seat, laid off his upper garments, girded himself with a towel, literally in the fashion of a servant, and himself washed and wiped their feet. Such an act of condescension awoke the remonstrances of Peter; but Jesus, having undertaken these offices of the servant, insisted on completing them. He even seemed to establish them as a rite of perpetual obligation. "If I, then, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."†

This precept, if it is indeed a precept, has been regarded by but one small and almost unknown sect. Yet in form it is almost as explicit as any which Jesus ever uttered. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper receive the sanction of a command more unambiguous. For this almost universal disregard there is but one explanation consistent with true allegiance to Christ. No ceremony is of the essence of religion. No law or method of administration is of prime importance. The spirit only Jesus commands. In the Orient this feet-washing was significant. In our Occidental life it would lose all its meaning and degenerate into a mere lifeless ritual. There is no ceremony which the Church may not modify as necessity requires. There is no spiritual law which it can relax. The language may change, the truth must abide.

Jesus resumed his seat, and commenced the administration of the paschal service. He pronounced a blessing on the feast, poured out and passed to his disciples the first cup,‡

* Luke xxii., 24–30.

† John alone records this incident (John xiii., 1–20). The phrase "The supper being ended" (verse 2) would be better translated "the supper being set," or perhaps "begun."

‡ Luke xxii., 17. This is not the cup of the Lord's Supper. See ver. 20.

passed the bitter herbs, carved the lamb, circulated the second cup. But a pall hung over this supper. It was no feast of joy. It was indispensable to Judas's purpose that he should continue to be one of the twelve. The presence of this uncongenial soul was a restraint. It was impossible for Jesus to unveil himself before his betrayer in the confidence of love.* He had already declared that he should be betrayed. He now gave this declaration a new significance: "The hand of him that betrayeth me," said he, "is with me on the table."

This declaration produced the utmost excitement and consternation. But to the eager questioning of his disciples, "Is it I?" Jesus made no response. John was leaning on his bosom. At Peter's suggestion, he put the question more privately: "Lord, who is it?" But Jesus only repeated his previous declaration in a different form: "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish," said he, "the same shall betray me." At the same time, according to the order of the Jewish ritual, he dipped a second time the bitter herb in the dish of sauce, then passed the dish to the twelve for them to follow his example.

In so doing he handed it first to Judas.

Thunder-stricken at the sudden unveiling of his secret purpose, Judas had been at first silent. Now recovering his self-possession, he sought to hide his confusion by repeating the question of the other disciples: "Master, is it I?" They noticed, in their intense excitement, neither this question nor the affirmative response of Jesus, who added, "What thou doest, do quickly." This sentence, unmeaning to them, was full of significance to the traitor. Jesus's comprehension of his purpose seemed to threaten its defeat. Clearly what he did must be done quickly or not at all. All the malign passions of his nature intensified by what, despite the gentleness of Jesus, seemed to him a public exposure, anxious no longer

* Observe, as indicative of this effect of Judas's presence on the heart of Jesus, John xiii., 21.

to conceal his purpose, but only to execute it, he rose from the supper-table and left the room.

His guilty conscience rendered him sensitive and suspicious. He thought he had been read by all the disciples. But he was mistaken. So ambiguous had been Christ's language that Judas alone understood him. The rest thought only that their fellow-disciple had gone on business connected with their little company.*

Now it was that Jesus, by a few simple sentences, instituted the sacred service, which will last so long as love lives on the earth. At the burial-service bread was broken among the mourners, and the cup of consolation passed to them. By his words Jesus seemed to convert the joyous festival of Jewish emancipation into a funeral service. Passing the broken bread of the paschal feast, he substituted for the words of the Jewish ritual a new sentence of solemn meaning: "This is my body, broken for you." Passing the final cup of the supper, for the word of praise and thanksgiving he uttered the enigma, "This is my blood of the New Testament, shed for many for the remission of sins." Then, by a single sentence, he endowed this simple service with its immortal life—

"This do in remembrance of me."

Thenceforth at this table, at which no uncircumcised male might before sit down,† should sit many from the north and the south, the east and west, children of the kingdom. Here the Old Dispensation and the New should meet in communion. Henceforth, to the table made sacred by the participation of Moses and Aaron, of Saul and David, of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the later prophets, all the world should be welcome that remembers Christ in love. Henceforth, in the fellowship of that grace that makes of one blood all the nations on the face of the earth for to dwell together, this table, hedged about by no impossible conditions, preserved for no favorite people, and administered by no priesthood, should be open to

* John xiii., 28, 29. † Exodus xii., 43–45.

all, of every nation and of every sect, who love Jesus in sincerity, and desire, in the method he has appointed, to memorialize his love.

This inexplicable change in the service did not relieve the disciples from the gloom which was cast over them by the prophecy of Christ's betrayal and the singular withdrawal of Judas. It was deepened by the pathetic words which accompanied that change. In the prophecies of Jesus there was no longer any ambiguity. One of the twelve he had already declared should betray him. He now added that the close of his earthly mission had come; that his betrayal should take place that very night; that he should be seized, and his disciples scattered as shepherdless sheep; and that one of them—one among the most ardent and most faithful —would purchase immunity from the terrors that were before them by denying his long-confessed allegiance. It was already night; all this would occur before the cock-crow of early dawn.

At these words there settles over each of the disciples an irrepressible sadness, a nameless terror, an indescribable gloom. Never did man need the succor of human sympathy more than the man Christ Jesus then. Facing the cold sweat of the midnight agony in Gethsemane, and the fearful horrors of the morrow's mob; satisfied that at last his disciples dimly comprehended the trials through which he was about to lead them, he consecrated these last quiet hours of his life to words that were long their consolation and inspiration, and that, thanks to the loving pen of John, have been an exhaustless source of consolation and of strength to his disciples in hours of trial and affliction ever since.

The heart refuses to accept the cold analysis which the intellect affords of words so precious. The historian can only point his readers to that record of them which the beloved disciple has afforded us—forever beloved of the universal Church of Christ for his gift of these divinest pages in all the blessed Word of God.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GETHSEMANE.*

RISING from the table, Jesus, during the utterance of these ever-memorable words, left the room,† traversed the now deserted streets of the city, passed through one of its eastern gates, crossed the brook Kedron, and sought, in one of the numerous gardens which covered the slope of the Mount of Olives, his favorite retreat. The moon was now at its full. Its rays, struggling through the thick shade of the olive and the tangled vines that formed the fretted roof of his rural sanctuary, illumined the garden with its peculiar light, and cast a deeper shade beneath its umbrageous trees. It was nearly midnight. From the neighboring city the lights of many a paschal supper in many an upper chamber were still twinkling; but the only sound that broke the utter stillness of the hour was the song of the neighboring brook and the faint echo of the watchman's cry from the city walls as, in his nightly rounds, he called the hours as they passed. The gloom that settled so darkly over the hearts of the still faithful eleven began to penetrate the heart of Jesus himself. The peculiar shadows of that moonlight hour typified the darkness, faintly illumed with hope and faith, that rested not

* Matt. xxvi., 36–56; Mark xiv., 32–54; Luke xxii., 39–54; John xviii., 1–15.

† John xviii., 1. Literally, "These words speaking, Jesus went forth," etc. At what time he left the room is of course uncertain. It seems reasonable, however, to suppose that he did so at the time indicated in ch. xiv., ver. 31: "Arise, let us go hence," especially as the discourse of the vine which follows is redolent of the vineyard and the garden. For other theories, see Alford on John xv., 1.

only on the souls of Jesus's little band, but now on that of their master also.

The prayer of benediction which he had uttered in the presence of them all was an insufficient outlet to his overburdened heart. He directed most of his disciples to await his return near the entrance of the garden; Peter, James, and John he asked to accompany him to its remotest solitude. In that hour of grief the heart of Jesus craved the sympathy of congenial friends—desired the presence of no others. He had strengthened their hearts by the outpouring of his love and the uplifting of his soul in prayer. He asked them to strengthen him by their prayers mingled with his own.

But even this might not be. This burden he must bear alone. Even the poor solace of companionship was, in that hour of grief, denied him.

Whatever perfection of divine strength the universal faith of Christendom may attribute to Jesus, it is certain he was not elevated above the common woes of humanity. However we might delight to depict the Son of God conquering sin and Satan, as young David did Goliath, by a single well-directed blow, it is not thus his biographers have portrayed his life. He was not only a man of sorrows—he was acquainted with grief. A repressed conflict, hidden beneath the calm exterior of his life, spoke occasionally in strange and uncomprehended soliloquies—"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?"* "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."† "Ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."‡

Three times in his earthly course this inner life revealed itself in mystic experiences—the temptation, the agony in the garden, and the cry upon the cross. Whoever ventures

* Luke xii., 50. † John xii., 27. ‡ John xvi., 32.

to study these experiences, must do so with a reverential heart. Whoever would truly comprehend the life of Jesus can not pass them by unstudied. "Whenever," says Krummacher, "I am called upon to treat of the sacred mysteries of Gethsemane, I can not divest myself of a certain degree of awe." "A feeling always seizes me as if it were unbecoming to act as a spy on the Son of the living God in his most sacred transactions with his heavenly Father." "But the Gospel brings the mysterious narrative before us for consideration, and hence it is incumbent upon us to enter into its sacred gloom, and seek to comprehend as much of it as human apprehension is capable of."*

Christ's Church still awaits its Lord without these garden walls. His dearest friends still abide a stone's cast from him. No one is permitted to enter into the mystery of his experience of grief; but no one who loves his Lord can pass it by uncontemplated. While he agonizes, let us not sleep, but watch.

Almost in the very spot where David, a thousand years before, fleeing from the treachery of Absalom and Ahithophel, had poured out his soul in an agony of prayer, great David's greater Son rested under the shadow of a baser treachery, and, facing with clearer foresight a far more dreadful future, wrestled in prayer with a relentless terror that might almost have borrowed the very words of his ancestor's prophetic experience:

> My heart is sore pained within me;
> And the terrors of death are fallen upon me;
> Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me;
> And horror hath overwhelmed me.†

The circumstances were such as might well fill any human heart with dark foreboding and bitter conflict. And we are never to forget that Jesus's heart was human.

He loved life; loved this beautiful world, with its bright

* The Suffering Savior, p. 116.

† Psalm lv., 4, 5. Compare also verses 12–14, 21.

flowers and its sweet birds; loved the Galilean lake and the sacred stillness of its everlasting hills; loved, too, his friends with all the fervency of an ardent and affectionate nature. Life was just opening before him with its bright promises of the future, and now, in the very prime of manhood, when his whole nature was eager for its work, he was called on to leave all and die.

Die by a death whose unutterable agonies faded from thought in a clear apprehension of its unutterable shame.

The very clearness of his prophetic vision must have intensified the horrors of the morrow. Our fears are lightened in the darkest hour by a strange, sometimes an utterly baseless hope. Not so his. He received already the shame and spitting of the high-priest's servants, saw the infuriated mob, heard their furious outcries, felt his flesh quivering beneath the blows of the cruel scourge, witnessed the mockery of his title, his truth, and his cause, hung between the malefactors and before the scoffing crowd. Into this one hour was crowded, by prevision, the combined agony of all this experience of horror.

To the prophet's mind the future is often more real than the present. So it was to Jesus.

And yet this was the least.

He loved his country—loved her none the less because he loved humanity more. He had striven earnestly for her redemption; had endeavored to purify her of her corruptions; had sought to unite the contending factions which eventually made a divided nation an easy prey to the Roman destroyer. "Often," said he, with touching pathos, "would I have gathered thee together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." All hope of his nation's redemption must have been now sorrowfully relinquished. He beheld the city of Jerusalem crushing her own citizens beneath her falling walls and towers. He saw the peaceful Lake of Galilee reddened with the blood of slaughtered thousands, and her fleets illuming the surrounding hills with the

glare of their conflagration. He saw the people he loved rejecting the plan which might have made them the vanguard of Christianity, the peaceful conquerors of mankind, and rendering themselves outcasts and aliens throughout the civilized world.

Many an American in this generation has passed through a Gethsemane of agony for his country's preservation that may help to interpret one drop in the cup which Jesus was now drinking.

Yet this was but one drop.

He loved the Church—the Church which he was about to redeem by his blood. Its mournful future marched in funereal pageant before him. He knew that his followers must share his baptism with him; saw his cross laid heavily on shoulders less able to bear it than his own. He could not fail, too, to perceive its future history written in its present character. He felt the treacherous kiss of Judas on his cheek, and knew how many a false disciple would join the Church from motives of worldly ambition, to betray it whenever and wherever he could secure a better worldly price. He heard the blaspheming denials of Peter, and knew that many of his warmest, truest friends would repeat this cowardly denial, and never repeat the bitter tears of sorrow that followed it. He read the whole history of his Church, with its martyrdoms, its corruptions, its schisms, its contentions, its hot hate, and its cold love.

Was it for this he was to pay a price so dear? Was such a harvest with such sowing?

He felt surely a keener anguish in the sharp thrust of ungrateful, unappreciative hearts. He was the friend of the common people. It was for his defense of them against the oppressions of the priestly party that he was about to die; and yet it was the cry of the common people that crucified him. This was but a prophecy of the future. He saw the seeming fruitlessness of his sacrifice; he saw his cross despised by some, ignored by many more; he heard the story

of his love repeated in a thousand pulpits by cold lips, and falling in a thousand congregations on dull ears.

This vista of the future might well have shaken any human resolution. The priesthood wrested his teachings to his own destruction. If the words of that fatal Tuesday could but be recalled, if they never had been spoken, the terrors of Friday would not face him now. Literally he laid down his own life; no man took it from him. Strange if the momentary question did not obtrude itself whether those words were needful—whether he was not, indeed, throwing away a life which duty, as well as instinct, demanded he should preserve?

Jesus habitually called himself the Son of man. In this moment all the humanity within him must have combined against his divine purpose of self-sacrifice. Not only love of life, holy ambitions, strong affections, but conscience, and love also, seemed to remonstrate against a sacrifice so great for souls so indifferent. Even the pure sympathies that extorted tears from his eyes at the grave of Lazarus throbbed with the anguish of his mother and the dark dejection of his downcast disciples.

In this hour, too, was fulfilled his prophecy, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."* What dark suggestions of the Evil One were whispered to Christ's soul Christ has not revealed. Of this, however, we may be sure, that he who employed in the wilderness all his arts of flattery, employed in the garden all his inconceivable enginery of malice.

In the reactions of such an hour the very foundations of the being are broken up. The soul seems to lose its moorings. Hope is no longer a sure anchor. Invisible truths seem shadowy and evanescent, heaven remote, God himself withdrawn, nothing true. Who has not known hours when bitter conflicts, culminating, obscure even the moral vision, and leave the soul for the moment hopeless and in despair?

* John xiv., 30.

Yet these experiences of the man Christ Jesus do not interpret to us the bitter agony of that midnight hour.

A deeper, an inexplicable terror confronts us.

The soul-conflict of the Son of man we can dimly shadow to ourselves, but no human experience can interpret the unutterable agony that pierced the heart of the Son of God. With reverential steps we have entered these outer courts of his life. The holy of holies of his heart, where atonement is made for the sins of the people, we dare not seek to enter. "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." So much of the prophet's declaration we can partially comprehend; but who can fathom its conclusion: "We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all?"

The sting of death is sin. That sting entered Christ's soul. This bitterness of death he tasted for every man. It was not only the sorrows of a world that were concentrated into a single hour, the sins of a world were bound upon a single soul. There are times when the flood-gates of recollection open, and the accumulated guilt of a lifetime overwhelms the conscience in despair. There are times when some sudden gleam, some thunderbolt in life, illuming the dark clouds of a past black with duties neglected and sins committed, reveals them to the startled consciousness in masses more heavy, and more terribly surcharged with wrath than ever the conscience had before conceived. Then the soul bears for a moment its own iniquity. But to bear this burden for humanity—to see, as in the revelations of an instantaneous vision, the dark deeds and darker thoughts of generations past and generations yet to come; to turn from the setting sun of the past to the rising sun of the future, and alike in the night and in the morning horizon of history see only written the deep damnation of a lost world; and then to feel the dark pall of this accursed load settling strangely down upon the soul—a soul whose divine purity trembled with unutterable horror at the lightest thought of sin—this, infinitely more than human experience,

is incapable of any other interpretation than that which it receives from the superhuman agony of him who for our sakes endured it.

Solitude became insupportable. Twice the sufferer sought the companionship of his friends. Each time he found them —wearied with watching and anxiety—asleep; so soundly sleeping that even his mild reproach to Peter, "What! couldst thou not watch with me one hour?" failed truly to arouse him.

Solitude is preferable to such companionship. To his solitary struggle he returned again.

The moon was veiled this fearful night in an eclipse. Her blood-red face told the story of the morrow's blood; a deeper, darker shadow rested on the garden and on its solitary sufferer; a deeper, darker shadow on his heart.

The cold of an almost winter night was forgotten in the hot agony of that hour. Great drops of perspiration stood on the forehead. The surcharged heart drove the blood in dangerously accelerated currents. It oozed and dropped in bloody sweat upon the ground.* Life can not long bear such draughts upon its forces. A little longer of unaided battle might have converted Gethsemane into the sacrificial altar of the world.

But Jesus was not left unaided. An angel gave that strength which man denied, and bore him up against the prostration of this terrible struggle.

Yet in it all, strengthened or alone, the divine purpose of his life never for an instant swerved. It was not too late even now to withdraw from the work he had undertaken, or to fly the nation that cast him out, and in new fields and by new methods seek the world's redemption; but this thought never gained entrance to his heart. Never once did his soul cease from its prayer, "Father, thy will, not mine, be done."

* For instances of bloody sweat produced by great mental agony and struggle, see Stroud on Physical Cause of Christ's Death, p. 85–88, note iii., p. 379–389.

This prayer of Christ is the Christian's best prayer. The soul thus anchored to the will of God never makes shipwreck.

Gradually that will became clear again to Jesus. The humanity within him bowed to his unshaken purpose. His soul resumed its self-conscious power. The outcry of his heart was changed. No more he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but, "If this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." The powers of sin, beating in vain against his steadfast heart, grew less violent. The strength of the tempest was broken. Clouds and darkness no longer environed him. He felt anew the strong assurance of his Father's presence, saw in the deeper future the ripened fruit of the morrow's planting, by faith perceived the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. Already, in imagination, he had endured the cross with the patience with which, upon the morrow, he bore unmurmuring its agony. Divinely strengthened, he despised its shame; and even now, in the flesh, he felt himself sitting down at the right hand of the Father in the glory of his love.

The battle was over—the victory won; and the tumult of the morrow was unable to disturb the deeper peace of his soul, who thus drank the cup of death even before his foes pressed it to his lips.

While Jesus was thus preparing himself and his disciples for the trying events of the morrow, Judas had hurried from the supper-table to the palace of the high-priest. A tumult of conflicting passions, the revenge of wounded self-love, the hope of sordid ambition, the spurs of a perverted conscience, struggling with whatever of better life and purpose long intimacy with Jesus may have awakened in his heart, seems now to have borne him along in a current from which he no longer even sought to escape. The full issue of his crime he had probably never considered—never suffered himself to consider. Crime rarely possesses true foresight.

The high-priest's palace was open to Judas at any hour; the high-priest himself awaited his coming. The paschal feast was not too sacred in his eyes to be broken in upon for the purpose of arresting Jesus. The Levitical police of the Temple were quickly summoned. An application was made to the Roman centurion in the neighboring tower of Antonia for a guard of Roman soldiers; for the priestly party still feared resistance—feared still more the interference of the Roman procurator. They desired also to impress upon his mind the dangerous character of the outlaw they were about to arrest. Their application was readily granted, and a little after midnight the band were passing through the same gate through which Jesus and his friends had passed a little while before. The Galilean peasantry, keeping within the city walls the paschal feast, could not easily be aroused to proffer any resistance to their favorite teacher. If they heard in the midst of their festal service the measured tramp of this patrol, they little comprehended its significance. Thus the very sacredness of the hour aided the purposes of the priestly party.

The guard were well armed—the Jewish police with heavy clubs, the Roman soldiery with short swords. They carried flambeaux with them, to assist, if need be, in their search. Judas marched at the head of the troop. A singular infatuation urged him to complete in person his treacherous design. He was familiar with Jesus's favorite retreats, and led his new companions straight to the garden of the wine-press.

Thus it happened that Jesus, praying in that garden "Thy will be done," heard in the measured tramp of the approaching guard, and saw in their lights gleaming across the intervening brook, God's answer to his prayer—God's will that the cup should be drunk to its dregs.

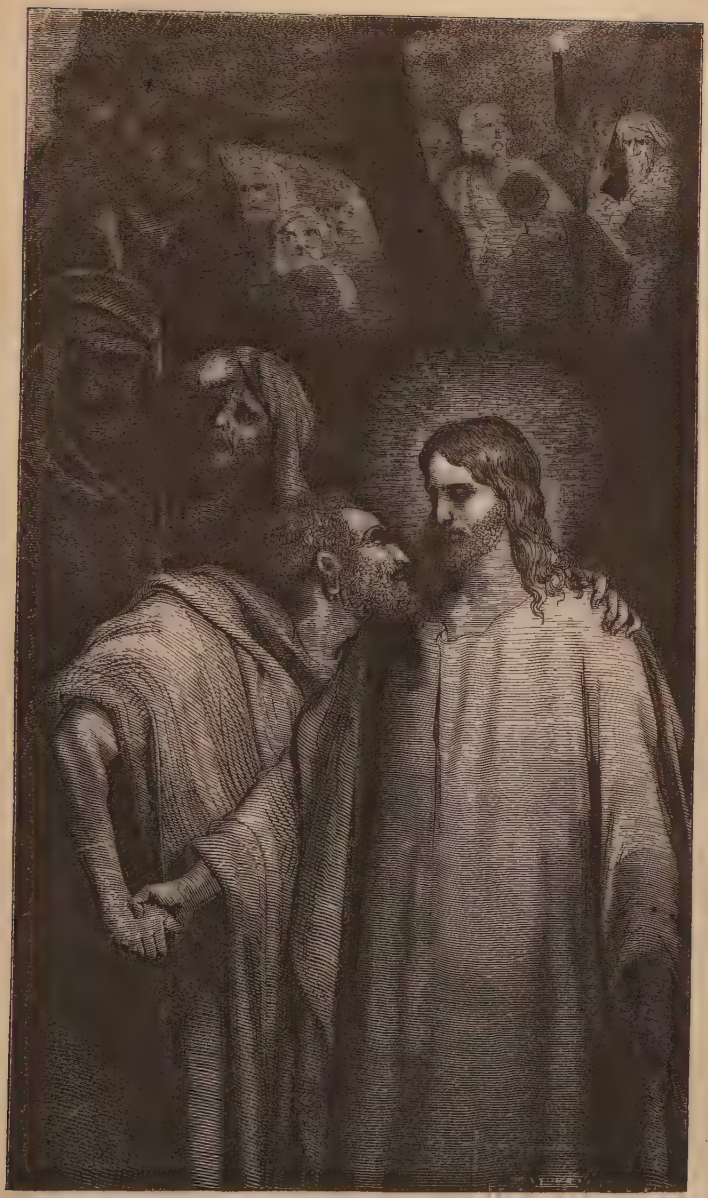
He hurried to the entrance of the garden. His first thought was of the disciples he had left there, his first care to secure their safety. A single short sentence sufficed to awaken the three friends who had accompanied him. The sound of the approaching band had perhaps awakened the rest. Aroused

from sleep to find themselves surrounded by the Roman guard, in whose midst their eyes, still heavy with sleep, discerned one of their own number, it is not strange that the accounts which they have left us partake of the confusion and alarm that filled their minds. We might well doubt their authenticity were it otherwise.

Judas greets his master with a kiss. Even his ready assurance can find no response for Jesus's gentle, and, therefore, poignant rebuke. The more than human majesty of the Lord throws the band into momentary confusion. It is increased by his voluntarily designating himself as the object of their search. They are prepared for resistance, not for surrender. They retreat for the moment from before this single unarmed peasant-Rabbi, and fall backward to the ground. The disciples are filled with a strange hope of supernatural deliverance. The stories from their Old Testament Scripture of hosts of aliens put to flight by a single hero of Israel* have prepared their minds for such expectations. They appeal eagerly to Jesus for leave to follow up this retreat of their foes with a vigorous onslaught. Peter can not wait for a reply, but draws his sword on Malchus, who loses an ear instead of his head only because the assault is too impetuous to be sure-aimed. It is by no means certain that for the moment resistance would have been in vain. It is reasonably certain that escape was possible.

But Jesus will neither resist nor flee. The suddenness of the exigency has no power to disturb his equanimity. He commands his disciples to put up their swords. With a touch of the hand he restores the ear of the high-priest's servant. Of his captors he asks but one favor, that his disciples be suffered to depart unmolested. This request the eleven interpret as a command to them to flee. In that moment their master's prophecies of his sufferings and death flash with new significance across their minds. While the soldiery, now re-

* As, for example, Samson, Judges xv., 15; Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv., 1–23; David, 1 Sam. xvii.



THE ARREST.

assured, seize Jesus, his frightened followers make good their escape. Meanwhile, the spell of the momentary awe broken, every hand of the guard is ready to help in binding the prisoner. To this Christ offers a dignified but unavailing remonstrance. He is not a thief or a robber, he says, and if he was deserving of arrest, might have been taken at any time in the Temple. But he offers no resistance. The thongs are bound around his wrists, and the guard, this work accomplished, retrace their steps by the way they came, their prisoner in their midst. Judas still accompanies them.

In the dark shadows of the trees, and beneath the overhanging houses of the narrow streets, two figures furtively creep, following the guard. These are Peter and John, determined to see the final issue of this fearful night.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE COURT OF CAIAPHAS.*

SHAMEFUL degeneracy and disorder characterized the times of which we write. Justice was little more than a name. The functions of the courts of Judea were usurped by their heathen conquerors. They had lost their responsibility to the people, and therefore the sanction that alone preserves the purity of public officials. The monarchy no longer existed. The high-priesthood, an office half religious, half political, was filled by appointees of the Roman court. They were removed and appointed at the pleasure of the Roman governor. This office, that was originally held for life, was filled in a hundred and seven years with twenty-seven appointees. It is with delicate sarcasm, therefore, that John describes Caiaphas as high-priest for this year.

For nearly fifty years, however, this office had been really under the control of one Annas or Ananus. He seems to have been one of that class of politicians who are willing that others should occupy the place of state, provided that they may really wield its powers. Five of his sons in succession held the no-longer-sacred office. It was at this juncture filled by a son-in-law. His name was Joseph Caiaphas. Both father and son were creatures of the Roman court. Both belonged to the Sadducaic party. Both were openly infidel concerning some of the fundamental truths of the Hebrew faith. Both were professional politicians. The key-note to their character is afforded in the too frank utterance

* Matt. xxvi., 57–75; Mark xiv., 53–72; Luke xxii., 54–71; John xviii., 13–27.

of Caiaphas at the informal conference of the Sanhedrim, immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."* The patriotism of these priests was that of the place-hunter. It was far better that Jesus should lose his life, and the Judean courts their purity, than they their office.

To Annas, as the moving spirit of the priestly party, Jesus was therefore first taken. Upon Annas really, more than upon Pilate, more than upon Caiaphas, who was simply the executioner of his father's will, the responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus rests.

Yet Annas had no intention of bearing that responsibility. He sent the prisoner at once, bound as he was, to Caiaphas. Their houses were probably not far apart. It is even surmised that they occupied apartments in the same building. The Temple was near at hand. The judgment-hall of Pilate was in a tower built on the same rock-platform with the Temple, and overlooking it. The hill of execution was just outside the city gates. Thus the events which we are about to narrate all transpired on a stage whose radius was probably not more than half a mile.

Word was at once sent to the members of the Sanhedrim. Twenty-three were required to constitute a court. In the mean while, Caiaphas submitted Jesus to a preliminary examination.

The Jewish law knew nothing of the merciful provision which forbids a prisoner from criminating himself. On the contrary, it was customary to subject him to an examination analogous to that practiced at a later day in the Inquisition. Witnesses were concealed behind a screen, who reduced his words to writing. He was then called upon to answer the questions of the judge. Such questions Caiaphas now addressed to Jesus. The past failures of his party to entrap this seemingly simple-minded Rabbi might have taught him

* John xi., 50.

the certain failure of this plan. Jesus declined to give any information as to his disciples. As to his doctrine, he referred Caiaphas to the audiences who had listened to his teaching in the Temple. One of the attendants, indignant at the calm but invincible dignity of Jesus, struck him a blow with the palm of his hand. He justified this act under the pretense that Jesus had insulted Caiaphas. Jesus simply replied that, if he had done wrong, he should be convicted of it upon a fair trial; if not, he should not be smitten without trial.*

While these events were transpiring, Peter had gained access to the palace. John, who was known to the high-priest, obtained admission for him. The house of the Jew was built, as already described, around an open square. An arched gateway, leading under and through the house, admitted to the court-yard in the centre. In one of the apartments opening out from this court-yard the examination of Jesus was being held. The night was cold. The servants had kindled a little fire in a brazier in the centre of the court. Peter drew up to the group to warm himself. Unrecognized and emboldened, he at length sat down among them.

By this very act he unconsciously identified himself with the enemies of Jesus. It was an act full of moral danger.

Doubtless his heart was full of anxiety. He desired to be near his Lord. But this was not all. His curiosity was presumptuous. His pride of character was strong. He had solemnly protested that he would never forsake Jesus. Christ had piqued his pride by the declaration that he would deny him. He desired to show his courage, partly to assure his Lord, more perhaps to assure himself.

It was the same spirit of almost bravado that made him ask permission to walk upon the wave.

It is true, John was also in the palace; but John's position was very different. He was not *incognito*. He was known to the high-priest and to his servant. In the palace he was still a professed disciple.

* John xviii., 19–24.

Something in Peter's mien betrayed his restless consciousness that he was out of place. The maid who had admitted him, with a woman's quick intuition, perceived it. She observed him narrowly for a few moments, then communicated her suspicions to the rest. This man, said she, as well as John, is one of the Galilean disciples. Ready audacity does not always carry with it ready wit. Peter, utterly unprepared for this—for which he should have prepared himself ere he ventured into the palace—saw no way out of his dilemma but by a lie. He used it. I know him not, said he. At the same time, he made as though he was warm enough, and uneasily retreated to the arched entrance of the palace. Here he could still watch the issue of the trial. The glare of the fire was no longer on his face. In the darkness he trusted to escape detection. But he who begins by concealing his principles is usually sure to end with denying them.

Among the Temple police who were loitering here one thought he recognized him; but Peter again repeated his denial, and by the mere strength of his asseveration quieted for the time the officer's suspicions.

Meanwhile the eastern sun began to speck the spires of Jerusalem with gold. Already, from the gardens on the distant hill, the crowing of a cock had come faintly echoed over the city walls, a signal that might have served to remind Peter of his master's warning; but he had quite forgotten it. In the impulses of the moment, he forgot, too, the hazards of his situation—forgot his provincial dialect, joined in the conversation of the servants, perhaps defended his master, whose arrest could hardly fail to have been the topic of their conversation, till in the dawning light of day his unmistakable face was a third time recognized, now by a friend of Malchus, whose head had so narrowly escaped the sword. His impetuous denials, now vehemently repeated, fortified though they were by oaths, only confirmed the suspicions of the servants. They recognized his Galilean accent. "Thy speech betrayeth thee," said they.

A second time the crowing of the cock from the distant garden was heard in the silent air. At the same moment, Jesus, led forth to his formal trial in the council-chamber, cast upon his disciple a look full of tender reproach.

In that instant the scenes of the night passed in vision before unhappy Peter—his master's words of warning; his own words of boastful self-assurance; his slumber in the garden; his impetuous and worse than useless assault; his thrice-repeated denial of his Lord. In all that night he had brought nothing but harm to his master's cause—added only anguish to his heart. In that look he read the truth that no insult, no blow from Caiaphas's servants, had so wounded Jesus as these denials from this his most trusted friend. He thought no more of danger—no more sought to conceal his discipleship. He buried his face in his mantle, and hastened from the palace as from a polluted spot.

"And he went out and wept bitterly."*

Meanwhile the members of the court had convened, and the preparations for the formal trial were completed.

In tracing the judicial proceedings in the case of Jesus, the difference between the Occidental and the Oriental forms of procedure must not be forgotten. Then, as now, the Oriental courts administered a singularly wild and turbulent form of justice. The sympathies of the populace were almost without exception against the accused. The presumptions were all practically, though not legally, against him. No careful protection surrounded the person of the prisoner. Popular indignities were showered upon him without interference from the public authorities, often with their connivance and assent. He was struck, spit upon, reviled, bandied roughly to and fro. Defense and prosecution were inextricably intermixed. The court-room often became a perfect babel of contending voices, in which the loudest was the most successful.

It is indeed true that the Jewish books contain an elabo-

* Matt. xxvi., 57, 58, 69–75; Mark xiv., 54, 56, 66–72; Luke xxii., 54–62; John xviii., 13–18, 25–27.

rate, and, on the whole, a remarkably merciful code. The court could not be convened by night; the accused could not be condemned on his own confession; two witnesses were necessary to secure sentence of death; these witnesses must be examined in the presence of the accused; he had the opportunity of cross-examination; a perjurer was liable to the penalty which would have been visited in case of conviction upon the prisoner; the latter had a right to be heard in his own defense; a verdict could not be rendered on the same day as the trial, nor on a feast-day; the discovery of new evidence, even after the preparations for execution had commenced, entitled the condemned to a new hearing.

But it is a mistake to trace the actual history of the Jewish courts in the rules and precedents of their books. One might as well attempt to form a correct conception of the trials under Lord Jeffreys from a study of the statutes of James II., or the actual procedures of a Roman court from a perusal of the Pandects of Justinian. It is the very curse of degenerate and disordered times that laws and precedents are set aside by passion and by partisan interest.

It was certainly so in the case of Jesus. The letter of the law forbidding trials by night seems to have been regarded,* but its spirit was violated by a midnight examination, and by a final trial in the first gray twilight of early dawn. A quorum of the court was present, but it was convened in haste so great, and with notice so inadequate, that at least one of the most influential friends of Jesus seems to have had no opportunity to participate in its deliberations.† Witnesses were summoned, and discrepancies in their testimony were noted; but the just and reasonable rule requiring the concurrent testimony of two was openly and almost contemptuously disregarded. An opportunity was formally offered Jesus to be heard in his own behalf, but no adequate time was afforded him to secure witnesses or prepare for his defense, and the spirit of the court denied him audience, though its

* Luke xxii., 63. † Luke xxiii., 51.

formal rules permitted him a hearing. Finally, all other means of securing his conviction having failed, in violation alike of law and justice he was put under oath, and required, in defiance of his protest, to bear testimony against himself. The law requiring a day's deliberation was openly set aside, and with haste as unseemly as it was illegal the prisoner was sentenced and executed within less than twelve hours after his arrest—within less than six after the formal trial.

The location of this trial is uncertain. Many critics have supposed that it took place in the palace of the high-priest. But the Jewish code required all capital cases to be tried within the Temple walls. There is no adequate reason for supposing that this rule had yet become obsolete; and one of the evangelists intimates that it took place in the council-chamber.* This was a large circular saloon of stone connected with the Temple. It was approached through a vestibule and spacious hall, and was lighted from the roof.

All Jewish trials were open to the public. Already a gathering crowd of Judeans, assembling about this council-chamber, filled up the vestibule and hall, and peered in at the open door. Through this constantly-increasing multitude Jesus was led by the Temple guards. It was the germ of the mob. This crowd, not the Sanhedrim within, were really to pronounce the verdict in his case.

Within, the judges, summoned in haste by messengers from the high-priest, were already gathered. Along one side of its naked walls of stone a score or so of them were ranged. The high-priest, in his robe of state, occupied the centre of this semicircle. His head was crowned with a turban of blue, inwrought with gold. On his bosom hung the priestly breastplate, in which glittered twelve precious stones, emblems of the twelve tribes of Israel. A flowing robe of blue, gathered about his waist by a girdle of purple, scarlet, and gold embroidery, enveloped his person, and set off the pure white linen of his capacious sleeves. The buttons of this

* Luke xxii., 66.

costly robe were onyx stones. His slippered feet were half concealed beneath the long fringe of his pontifical vestments, which were curiously embroidered with pomegranates in gold, and scarlet, and crimson. No Roman Catholic pontiff ever wore robes more resplendent than those in which the high-priest was attired on public and state occasions. Immediately before him sat the scribes or clerks of the court. The one on his left hand wrote down whatever testimony was adduced against the accused, what votes were cast for his condemnation. The one on the right transcribed what appeared in his favor.

The latter, on this occasion, had a leisure time.

The circumstances were all adverse to the prisoner at the bar.

On the one side sat the Sanhedrim. It consisted of a convocation of the wisest, the most honored, and the most learned men of the realm. It embraced leading representatives of the three orders of society—chiefs of the priestly courses, Rabbis learned in the literature of the Church, and elders chosen from among the most influential of the laity. It received the combined respect which a citizen pays to the ermine, and a churchman to the lawn. It was to Palestine what the high court of Parliament is to Great Britain. Tracing its history back to the days of Moses, claiming him as the first presiding officer in its councils, it received whatever of reverence attaches in the popular estimation to antiquity, whatever of awe invests institutions divine in origin.

On the other side stood this single Galilean Rabbi, pale and exhausted with the night of conflict and of watching, unfriended and alone. If on that bench he had a single friend, he had not one who, in that hour, had the courage to avow that friendship and advocate his cause.

It was about 4 o'clock in the morning of the 7th day of April, A.D. 34,* when this state trial, the most momentous in the history of the world, commenced.

* That is, supposing Christ to have been born in the year one of the Chris-

The high-priest, at once chief justice and public prosecutor, opened the case and presented the accusation. No record of the charges have been preserved by the evangelists; but their spirit, if not their form, is to be found in later Rabbinical literature.

It was charged that he was a preacher of turbulence and faction; that he flattered the poor and inveighed against the rich; that he denounced whole cities, as Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin; that he gathered about him a rabble of publicans, harlots, and drunkards, under a mere pretense of reforming them; that he subverted the laws and institutions of the Mosaic commonwealth, and substituted an unauthorized legislation of his own; that he disregarded not only all distinctions of society, but even those of religion, and commended the idolatrous Samaritan as of greater worth than the holy priest and pious Levite; that, though he pretended to work miracles, he had invariably refused to perform them in the presence and at the request of the Rabbis of the Church; that he had contemned the solemn sanctions of their holy religion, had sat down to eat with publicans and sinners with unwashen hands, had disregarded the obligations of the Sabbath, had attended the Jewish feasts with great irregularity or not at all, had declared that God could be worshiped in any other place as well as in his holy Temple, had openly and violently interfered with its sacred services by driving away the cattle gathered there for sacrifice; and, above all, that he had been guilty of the most heinous crime known to Jewish law—blasphemy—by asserting of himself that he was the contemporary of Abraham, the Lord of David, the superior of Solomon, the Son, even, of God.

Such are, in substance, the counts in the indictment which later Jewish writers present against Jesus. Unable to re-

tian era. If, as is now more generally supposed, he was born four years earlier, this date should of course be A.D. 30. See Chronological Note at close of the Preface.

cord the words, they doubtless fairly represent the animus of the tribunal they defend.*

This indictment Jesus received in patient silence. Not before this tribunal, but before God and the future he alone would plead. History may safely imitate his reserve. It records the indictment of his foes. It leaves his life to answer it.

The case proceeded. The ministry of Jesus had been chiefly in the outlying districts of Galilee and Perea. It had been one of singularly commingled boldness and caution—boldness in the truths he uttered, caution in the methods of his utterance. He never publicly proclaimed himself the Messiah. He forbade the evil spirits from announcing his character.† He received the confession of his disciples, but refused to permit them to repeat it to others.‡ Interrogated by the Jews whether he was the Christ, he had refused a direct reply, and had referred them to his works.§ He had given the same response to the public questioning of John's disciples. In most of his later ministry he had veiled his meaning in parables, which revealed the truth to honest inquirers, but hid it from his foes. "Probably no two witnesses could be found out of the ranks of the disciples who had ever heard out of his own lips an avowal of his Messiahship."‖

Judas might probably have been produced; but the unsupported testimony of Judas would have been of no avail. One witness was no better than none.

To a corrupt priesthood perjury is no crime in a holy cause. It was common then, as now, in the Orient; and the severe penalties which Moses had provided failed to invest the oath with the sacred sanction which attaches to it in our courts of justice. False witnesses, therefore, appeared to sustain the accusation of the priestly prosecutors. But in the haste of that night they had no time to compare notes and make up

* See Goldstein's Jesus of Nazareth, and Salvador's Trial and Condemnation of Jesus, passim.

† Mark i., 34.

‡ Matt. xvi., 20.

§ John x., 24.

‖ Andrews's Life of Christ, p. 501.

their case. Discrepancies were noticed in their testimony—discrepancies so great that even this court could not pass them by.

The prisoner had, indeed, no advocate. Attorneys were unknown to Jewish jurisprudence. But in the informalities of its primitive procedure, any one might interrupt a witness or offer a suggestion to the court on behalf of the accused. And Jesus was not wholly without friends. Some members even of the court in secret believed in him,* and doubtless watched the progress of the trial with beating hearts, secretly anxious for his acquittal, secretly laboring for it.

As every thing was put upon the record by the scribes, these discrepancies were carefully recorded. The court dared not disregard them. Only one of these testimonies has been preserved as a sample of the rest. On expelling the traders from the Temple, Jesus had prophesied that the priests would destroy that Temple by their corruptions, and he had promised to rebuild it in new glory by his resurrection. Two witnesses, distorting this prophecy of ruin and promise of restoration, testified that Jesus had threatened himself to raze the sacred edifice, that he might display his power by re-erecting it. This meaningless boast, if it had been uttered, would have afforded but a sorry basis for a charge of blasphemy. No court could pronounce judgment on such testimony.

Unproved accusations always react on the accuser. These were the last witnesses of the high-priest. Caiaphas, angered by the failure of his testimony—angered not less by the calm silence of the prisoner, endeavored to conceal his vexation by an assumption of confidence. He closed the case for the prosecution, and called on the prisoner for his defense.

"Answerest thou nothing?" he cried. "What is it these men testify against thee?"

Jesus made no reply. By his silence he testified his contempt for charges so baseless, sustained by evidence so inconclusive.

* John xii., 42.

Then at length the crafty priest resorted to an expedient as bold as it was illegal. By that expedient he publicly acknowledged the inconclusiveness of the testimony he had produced, and unwittingly confessed his faith in the sincerity of Jesus. In solemn language he addressed the prisoner at the bar. He administered to him the Jewish oath. He demanded that under the sanction of that oath he testify himself concerning his character and his mission.

"I adjure thee by the living God," he cried, "that *thou* tell us whether thou be the anointed one—the Son of God."

By that act the prosecutor and the prisoner changed places. The prisoner became judge; the judge an accused, who, from that moment, has never ceased to plead at the bar of public opinion for this prostitution of his judicial office.

For this act was as illegal as it was unjust. It not only violated that plain precept of universal justice that a prisoner shall not be required to criminate himself; it contravened the specific provision of the Jewish code, which forbade that any prisoner should be condemned upon his own confession.

Now, for the first time, Jesus spoke—spoke to offer a dignified protest against this violation of law and contempt of justice.

"If I answer," said he, "ye will not believe. If I ask you, ye will not answer. If I defend myself, ye will not let me go."

It is idle to inquire what might have been the issue of this trial if Jesus had made no other reply. It was the divine purpose that he should lay down his life. It was in accordance with that purpose that he should furnish the testimony for his own conviction.

"Nevertheless, I say unto you that hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Not only before the bar of public opinion, before the bar of God this court must answer for this day's proceedings.

Instantly and angrily a score of voices repeated the high-priest's question. The lawful protest of the prisoner was

overborne. His appeal to justice and to legal precedent was contemptuously disregarded.

"Art thou the Son of God?" they cried.

That moment was a crisis in the world's history. In the vestibule, before the servants, with many an oath, Peter had denied his master. In the council-room, before the high-priest, under judicial oath, Jesus proclaimed his mission.

"I am!"

The moment was one of sublime significance. This simple utterance constitutes the most weighty of all scriptural testimony to the divine mission and character of Jesus. It was no hyperbole of Oriental rhetoric; was spoken in no impassioned address. It is Christ's solemn testimony to himself, uttered at the most momentous crisis of his life, under the solemn sanction of an oath, in the course of judicial proceedings, in the presence of the highest council of the realm, in the far more sacred presence of God and his recording angels, at the peril of his life, and with a clear comprehension of the meaning which not only priest and people would attach to it, but with which it would be forever invested by humanity, crowding for centuries as spectators around this trial-scene. If it had not been true, it would have been blasphemy. If Jesus were not the Son of God, he would have been worthy of the death that was pronounced upon him.

The moral dignity of Jesus can hardly fail to have produced a momentary effect. It was neutralized by the impassioned but indecorous violence of the high-priest. With well-affected horror he rent his pontifical robes. With vehemence he demanded the instant sentence of the court. "What need have we of further testimony?" cried he; "ye yourselves have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?"

It is true that Jewish law forbade that any criminal be sentenced till the third day after his trial. It is true that the day before that sentence the court were required to spend in fasting and deliberation. It is true that religious ceremonial, enforcing the requirements of justice, forbade the

council from pronouncing the death-sentence on any national feast-day. But passion rarely is bound by precedent; and, in the passions of that hour, none dared demand for the prisoner these protections of the law. No voice dissented from the boisterous cry of guilty. The trial, conducted in haste, broke up in confusion. The by-standers took their cue from the high-priest. The Temple servants—parasites of the priests—vied with each other in heaping insults on the prisoner. He was spit upon. He was buffeted. Some one blindfolded him. Then the servants took turns in smiting him, demanding that he prophesy who struck the blow. The police who guarded him even shared in these shameful outrages. But Jesus's patience was immovable. All this he had already in spirit undergone.

The end was now nigh at hand. He no longer prayed that the cup might pass from him—only that he might drink it at a single draught.

Meanwhile the sentence of the council was borne out through the open doors. It was taken up and echoed by the crowd assembled before the council-chamber. In this crowd were incarnated the worst elements of human nature; intolerance of religious liberty; hatred of the Galilean; wounded Judean pride; a morbid hunger for the excitements of an execution. The words of the judges were re-echoed by the mob. "He is worthy of death!" These words, repeated from man to man, rolled into a popular outcry. Borne back through the open doors, they smote upon the ears of the crafty priest. He perceived in this verdict of the people the ready instrument for the execution of his purpose. Already the elements were gathering for a storm, before which even the Roman prosecutor would be compelled to bow.

For it was necessary that the sentence pronounced by the Jew should be confirmed by the Gentile, that all the world might be participators in the guilt of this act of Deicide. From the court of Caiaphas history conducts us to the judgment-hall of Pilate.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE JUDGMENT-HALL OF PILATE.*

RADICAL changes had taken place in the political condition of Judea during the thirty years which had elapsed since the birth of Christ—changes to which we have already adverted. Palestine was no longer a kingdom; Jerusalem was but an ecclesiastical capital. The Holy Land, divided into independent districts, had come more immediately under the military rule of Rome. Judea was a province of the Cæsars, and a military governor who bore the very general title of procurator occupied the throne made vacant by the death of Herod the Great and the deposition of Archelaus, his son. His head-quarters were at Cæsarea Philippi. This Gentile city was the military capital of the dismantled realm. But on great feast-days, when elements of turbulence and faction gathered in the sacred city, Pilate came hither too, to guard in person against the outbreaks of violence which were constantly threatened by the impetuous temper of the infatuated people.

It was necessary to secure this governor's sanction to the sentence which the Sanhedrim had pronounced against Jesus before it could be carried into effect.

It has, indeed, been a hotly-contested question among classical scholars whether, by Roman law, the Jews had not the right to inflict the death-penalty for religious offenses; but, whatever may have been their rights, it is certain they had not the power. It is indeed probable that the jurisdiction

* Matt. xxvii., 1–31; Mark xv., 1–20; Luke xxiii., 1–25; John xviii., 28–40; xix., 1–16; Acts i., 18, 19.

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of the Sanhedrim in such cases had never been officially determined since the demise of Herod the Great. Among the Pharisees there was an extreme reluctance to inflict the death-penalty. Some among them were in principle opposed to it

under any circumstances, and there is no reason to suppose that the question of their right to inflict it had ever arisen since the kingdom had been dismembered, and Judea had become a part of the real estate of the Roman emperor, administered by a steward of his appointment.

It is evident, at all events, that the priests themselves were somewhat uncertain as to their authority — were doubtful whether their proceedings would be subjected by the Roman governor to review, or would be at once and unquestioningly confirmed. They hoped the latter. Retiring from the council-chamber, in which the trial had been conducted, to some of the adjoining rooms of the Temple, or possibly removing Jesus to another apartment, the Sanhedrim went into secret session, nominally for the purpose of deliberating upon their verdict before it should be formally announced, really to consider how they should secure its execution, and, for this purpose, what measures they should take to obtain the ratification of the people and the confirmation of the procurator.*

The plans which were then proposed and agreed upon will be best indicated by the history of their fulfillment.

In the mean while Judas Iscariot had already received the fitting price of his treachery. The second dream of his ambition had been yet more rudely dispelled than the first. He was an outcast from his companions. No new companionship opened to receive him. The very men whose hands were busy with insults to his late master looked with undisguised scorn on one whom they accounted a double traitor — a traitor to Judaism in that he had joined this Galilean company; a traitor to that company in that he had betrayed their head. The most hardened and depraved have still a conscience that flames out against treachery, and, if the principles of human nature were the same in the first century that they are in the nineteenth, the position of Judas in the court of Caiaphas must have been more irksome than that of Peter. So far from taking a leading part in this state trial,

* Matt. xxvii., 1; Mark xv., 1.

he was not even summoned as a witness. So far from being fêted and caressed, he was an outcast and an alien. The same sensitive pride that aided to drive him on to the perpetration of his crime now turned upon him with fiery invectives to upbraid him for it. The infuriate court, the insulting menials, the gathering mob, all concentrating their increasing hatred upon the patient and unmoved figure whom he had long followed, and really loved, with such measure of affection as an ignoble soul is capable of, added the sting of remorse to that of self-reproach. He trembled as he saw what a fire he had helped to kindle; what an undying infamy he had purchased for himself.

Yet even in this hour he was still Judas Iscariot. His conscience was but the ally of his self-esteem. It was because he had blundered that he was conscious he sinned.

With the same impetuous and unthinking haste which characterized his crime, this unhappy, but yet more guilty man, endeavored to retrieve it. He broke into the midst of the chamber whither the council had retired under pretense of deciding the cause before them. Under Jewish law, as we have said, it was never too late to proffer testimony in behalf of the accused. This testimony the apostate disciple came to bear. He declared the innocence of the prisoner he had betrayed. At the same time, he offered to return the price that had been paid him for his treachery. The scornful response of the men who had used him as their tool, and had for him no farther service, completed the priestly payment of his crime. Life had no longer hopes for him. The hope which the pardoning love of Christ might have afforded, his ignoble heart did not comprehend. The double scorn of Jew and Galilean, the heavier burden of his own proud heart's scorn, was a punishment heavier than he could bear; and, casting down the thirty shekels that had purchased the life of Jesus at his hands, he went forth to die a death, the horribleness of which is enhanced rather than lessened to our imagination by the mystery which enshrouds it.

These pious priests, too scrupulous to put such money in the treasury of the Lord, thought it exactly fitted to procure unconsecrated ground for the burial of Gentiles. For this purpose it was accordingly appropriated. Thus the first-fruits of Jesus's death were unwittingly, almost prophetically applied by the Jewish priesthood to purchase for the Gentiles a typical resting-place.*

It was now broad daylight. The sun rises at Jerusalem, in the month of April, about five o'clock. It could hardly have been less than an hour high when Jesus was rebound and led by a delegation of the Sanhedrim to the judgment-hall of Pilate.

At the same time, some of the priests, undertaking to create a public sentiment against Jesus, if it should be necessary in order to wrest from the Roman government a ratification of the death-sentence, went out to mingle with the rabble, and circulate among them the priestly representation of the events of the trial and the conduct of the prisoner.

Built upon the same broad platform of solid rock with the Temple was the fortress of Antonia, which Herod, its founder, had named in honor of his friend Antoninus. This was at once the palace of Pilate and the barracks of his legions. Here five hundred soldiers found commodious quarters. Its capacious halls seemed like the streets of a little city, its suites of rooms like independent mansions. Its polished stones so adjoined the Temple walls that the Gentile camp seemed a part of the Jewish sanctuary. Four towers at its four corners gave it the appearance of a castle and the strength of a fortress. One of these towers, lifting its head far above the Temple walls, looked down into its broad courts, and thus subjected all the tumultuous gatherings there to the oversight of the hated heathen. Its gates, opening directly into those courts, rendered it easy, at a moment's notice, to quell any disturbance which might occur there.

* Matt. xxvii., 3–10; Acts i., 18, 19.

The Jewish feast-days were the Roman assizes. On these occasions Pilate, who united the offices of judge and governor in one person, was accustomed to hear complaints and adjudicate cases which had arisen during his absence from the city. Thus the fortress of Antonia was not only palace and barracks, it was also a court-house.

Hither the priesthood now led their prisoner. A motley rabble followed in their train. To the same hill, whither the triumphal procession had accompanied Jesus four days before, a very different procession accompanied him now. Eager eyes searched out this prisoner condemned to death. Angry faces frowned hate upon him. Hoarse voices repeated to one another the sentence of the court, "Guilty of death!"

The Passover feast, commencing on Thursday evening, lasted, as a religious rite, the whole of the following week. The subsequent Sabbath was a high day in the Jewish calendar. These priests were too pious to pollute their persons by treading on the Gentile pavement. They stopped at the castle door. The muttered threatenings of a gathering tumult reached the ears of Pilate. The management of the Jewish province was one of peculiar difficulty. To quell an outbreak even before it had occurred was an act of prudence. Pilate therefore came out at their request to give them audience. He found a prisoner presented to him for sentence. Military courts are rarely scrupulous about methods of procedure. Pilate was hampered by no legal forms. He was an irresponsible judge. The Roman senate would never inquire curiously after the life of a single Jew. The fate of Jesus was, humanly speaking, in his hands.

The Sanhedrim were not inclined to submit their proceedings to the revision of this heathen. How reluctantly their national pride submitted to such humiliation is evidenced by their later history, by the repeated attempts on the life of the apostle Paul, by the illegal execution of the martyr Stephen, by the martyrdom of James, brother of Jesus, for which

Annas the younger, bolder, but less crafty than his brother-in-law Caiaphas, suffered deposition. The priests at first declined, therefore, to report to Pilate any accusation. They demanded a ratification without a rehearing. "If he were not an evil-doer," said they, "we would not have delivered him up unto thee."

But Pilate was not so sure of that. At all events, it was not Roman justice to condemn any man unheard; and he peremptorily declined to be responsible for the prisoner's execution without knowledge of the circumstances of the case. "Take ye him and judge him," said he, scornfully, "according to your law."

The priesthood were prepared for this emergency. They presented a new indictment. A sedition had just occurred in the city. Three prisoners were awaiting execution that very morning for participating in these acts of violence. The priests accused Jesus of being the ringleader of the Galilean faction which was always foremost in these outbreaks. "We found this fellow," they said, "perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.

Such was their general charge. It is not difficult to conjecture the specifications which they produced to sustain it. Jesus had indeed always so guarded his utterances that honest hearers could not misapprehend their meaning. He had never been careful so to qualify them that they could not be perverted by dishonest foes.

He *had* claimed to be a king. He had assumed all the prerogatives of royalty. He had demanded absolute and supreme allegiance of his followers. He had promulgated laws. He had announced himself to be the supreme and final judge of mankind. He had organized in the heart of Cæsar's province the germ of an imperishable community. He had marched into Jerusalem attended by a multitude that hailed him "King of the Jews." In unmistakable parable, and more than once, he had proclaimed himself the prince royal,

come to take possession of his inheritance. His little body-guard were armed with swords; and his arrest had been finally accomplished only despite violent resistance. From these facts, repeated in perverted and exaggerated forms, it was easy for the priesthood to weave a charge of sedition, plausible, and seemingly well sustained. At the same time, they would be careful to conceal the facts that the legislation which Jesus had promulgated was for the government of the individual, not for the regulation of a political community; that he had steadfastly refused to arbitrate in civil disputes, or to act as judge in enforcing civil law; that first among the precepts for the government of his spiritual community was that of unconditional non-resistance; that he had repeatedly cautioned the enthusiastic multitude that his kingdom was not of this world, and would not immediately appear; and that the resistance which a single misguided follower had offered to his arrest was instantly rebuked, and its evil effects miraculously cured.

As to the charge that Jesus forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, it was not only wholly false, but in direct contradiction to the facts.

By thus misrepresenting much that Jesus had said, adding something and suppressing more—a method not unknown to modern priestcraft in ecclesiastical controversies—it was not difficult to present a case that really demanded of the procurator official investigation. He therefore assumed jurisdiction of the case, summoned Jesus within the fortress for a quieter examination, and asked him for an explanation of these charges.

Jesus would not defend himself before a dishonest tribunal. But the procurator, ignorant alike of the character and mission of Jesus, was really perplexed. It was his duty to prevent and punish sedition. And Jesus readily vouchsafed him the explanation he requested in a few brief but significant words, whose meaning a paraphrase may help to make clear.

He was a king, but he was no preacher of sedition. He

had formed no purpose of interfering with the government of Rome. He had no need to call witnesses. Two sufficient evidences were before the procurator now. Who had brought this accusation against him? The Jews. If it had been preferred by a Roman centurion, it might have been worthy of examination. But when was it ever known that the Jewish priesthood complained to their Gentile government of one who sought the political emancipation of the nation? None knew better than Pilate how restive were the people under the Roman yoke. The voices of the mob before the judgment-seat crying out for Jesus's blood were unwitting witnesses of his innocence. He was a king, but his kingdom was not of this world—was not, that is, formed on the principles nor maintained by the methods of political empires. If it had been, then surely from among the hundreds who only four days before had accompanied him to Jerusalem, as Pilate well knew, hailing him as their monarch, some would have been found ready to defend his person with their lives. Not to found a new dynasty nor to frame a new political organization had Christ come into the world, but to bear witness to the truth. His subjects swear allegiance only to the truth—to Jesus, because Jesus is the truth. And they only to whom truth is of higher worth than all else comprehend his voice and participate in his kingdom.*

Pilate half pityingly, half contemptuously replied with his famous question, "What is truth?" To this Roman Realist, knowing only kingdoms that are built by the sword and cemented by blood, this conception of an invisible kingdom of truth seemed but the baseless vision of a religious enthusiast.

But, though he lacked moral, he did not lack political penetration. It was clear this Galilean Rabbi was no rival to the Cæsars. The suspicions which he had from the first entertained of the motives of his old-time enemies were confirmed, and from this brief interview he returned to the accusers of Jesus to announce his judgment of acquittal.

* John xviii., 33–38.

Meanwhile the wily priests had sedulously stimulated the passions of the gathering populace. The city was crowded. The early morning drew the devout Jews to the Temple gates. The story of Jesus's trial and condemnation spread rapidly from mouth to mouth. The new indignity which Judaism experienced, now perhaps for the first time, of submitting to a heathen tribunal the judgment of Moses's court, stirred the always overheated blood of the impetuous Judeans. When the procurator came forth from his examination of the prisoner at the bar, an excited crowd had already gathered before his palace gate. It extended down the hill, crowded the narrow street, reached far back into the outer porches of the Temple—a crowd not patiently waiting the verdict of an honored judge, but angrily indignant that he should assume to question the authority and revise the proceedings of their supreme tribunal.

It was to this audience Pilate announced his judgment of acquittal: "I find no fault in this man."

The priesthood have never been quick to pay deference to the civil power. The Jewish priesthood were not the ones to set the Church an example of submission. From the calm judgment of the procurator they appealed to the passions of the populace. With many accusations, they demanded a reversal of his decision. The rising clamor of a gathering mob seconded the demand.

Then commenced a conflict in which the weak conscience of the procurator proved no match for the strong passions of the Jewish priests; in which, alternately, the judge appealed to the moral sense of the priesthood, and the priesthood to the fears of the judge.

Alas! the one had no moral sense; the other had many fears.

Pilate's part in the execution of Jesus was that of a tool in the hands of stronger natures. Several circumstances conspired to make him a reluctant tool.

He not only despised the priests—as the man of the camp

is but too apt to despise him of the temple—he hated them, as a proud Roman might well hate the men who had humbled him. Twice in his brief term of office he had measured lances with this same priestly party; twice their cunning had overmatched his strength. At his inauguration he had transferred the head of his army from Cæsarea Philippi to Jerusalem. For five days the Roman standards had floated gayly in the streets of the Holy City; for five days an infuriated crowd had besieged his palace, demanding their removal. At length the army had yielded to the mob, and had borne the Gentile insignia back to the Gentile city. A second time he had presumed to surround his military headquarters in the fortress of Antonia with the Roman shields. He had borne unmoved the imprecations of people and of priest at this new desecration of their holy hill, nor was it till he had received orders from Tiberius Cæsar, wrested from the emperor by the complaints of this same priesthood, that he had taken them down again. No wonder that the Roman pride of this twice-humiliated procurator revolted at becoming the instrument of these hated priests for the fulfilling of their nefarious designs.

Nobler motives, too, mingled with the baser ones.

The Roman was a stranger to love, but worshiped reverently at the shrine of law. She who has given jurisprudence to the world had not yet learned to do despite to justice. To Pilate as a soldier the life of a single Jew was matter of insignificance; to Pilate as a judge the life of a single subject was sacred. His conscience was never so sensitive as when the robes of his office were those of the bench.

Moreover, from the first, Jesus was even to Pilate's dull apprehension something more than a mere Jew — something, though he knew not what. That more than royal dignity which opened for Jesus a way through three infuriate mobs, which disarmed the guard in the Temple of their purpose of arrest, which drove them back in confusion in the garden, never shone more conspicuously than in the conflict before Pi-

late's judgment-seat. The prayer of Christ's lips, "Father, glorify thy son," was answered. The judge felt a nameless dread in the presence of his more than earthly prisoner.

The demeanor of Jesus intensified this dread.

For in all the fearful scenes of violence which ensued, Jesus alone was calm and unmoved—Jesus, whose life trembled in the decision of the hour. There are crises in which silence is greater than any speech, and he spoke but once after his brief preliminary examination in Pilate's hall. To the angry accusations of the priests, to the angrier clamor of the people, to the rude jests of Herod, to the cruel scorn of the Roman soldiery, he interposed only an impressive silence. If in this silence there had been only the patient courage of a Stoic, the old Roman would have admired it. But even his dull head perceived something more—a certain something, inexpressible, inexplicable.

Thus Roman pride and religious awe strengthened and stimulated the weak and wavering conscience of the procurator.

But he feared a tumult. He was less a soldier than a politician; less a true judge than either. He had no moral courage. He dared not assume responsibilities. Caiaphas had said it is better that one man should die than that the whole nation should perish. This argument repeated itself in Pilate's consciousness. It was better to quell this tumult by yielding up a single life than by sacrificing many. He forgot that justice is more than life. He forgot that noble maxim, familiar to every Roman judge as to every American school-boy, "*Fiat justitia ruat cœlum.*" This ignoble fear an ignoble self-interest seconded. He could neither communicate the awe he felt to his imperial master, nor explain the motives, inexplicable even to himself, which urged him to suffer a mob rather than permit the unjust execution of a single Jew.

Thus Pilate's soul was the arena of a battle fiercer than that which waged without. He possessed neither the cour-

age of virtue nor the audacity of shameless vice. At every interview with Jesus his better nature wakened, and he resolved to save the prisoner he dared not condemn. At every outcry of the clamoring crowd without his baser fears vanquished his judgment, and he resolved to sentence the prisoner he dared not acquit.

This battle he fought out alone. There was no man to help him, and he knew not God.

He was a man of expedients. To save Jesus he resorted to every expedient save that which could alone succeed—courageous, manly, decisive action. A brave man would have called out the cohort and dispersed the mob; but Pilate was not a brave man. He dallied, temporized, argued.

He that argues with a mob is already lost.

In the instant and clamorous accusation with which the priesthood sought to set aside the judgment of the procurator, he caught the word Galilee. Jesus, then, was a Galilean. To the tetrarch of Galilee he should be sent. Herod was a Jew; Pilate a Roman. Rival governors of contiguous provinces, political jealousy added to the bitterness of national prejudice. Pilate, with a politician's art, seized the opportunity to proffer the prisoner to Herod as a political compliment. It was accepted. From that day, says the evangelist, Pilate and Herod became friends. Thus in the very hour of his trial Jesus broke down the party wall between Jew and Gentile.

The palace of Herod was situated in the upper city. It crowned Mount Zion. Across the bridge that spans the ravine which divides Mount Zion from Mount Moriah, Jesus was led, accompanied by the Roman soldiery and by a delegation of the Sanhedrim. Herod had long been curious to see this prophet, to hear from his own lips his doctrine, and to witness his wondrous works. But Jesus neither spoke nor wrought to satisfy the curious. To this murderer of John the Baptist he had nothing to say. He never cast his pearls before swine. Herod, in scorn of his claims, arrayed

him in the cast-off apparel of royalty, and sent him back to Pilate's judgment-seat.*

To the Roman Jesus's kingdom was an unmeaning vision. To the Jew it was an idle jest.

The popular current flowed back with the prisoner to the Temple hill, and eddied once more about the corners of the streets and the doorways of the palace. The demand for his death grew momentarily louder and more instant.

Pilate resumed his judgment-seat. No longer truly governor of Judea, he plead for a reversal of the popular verdict. He rehearsed the results of his own examination. He cited the judgment of Herod, descendant of their own Jewish king. He offered to correct the errors of one whom he adjudged as a misguided, but not criminal enthusiast. "I will instruct him,"† said he, "and let him go." In vain. Passion and prejudice have no ears that reason can reach.

The more intense the clamors of the populace, the more intense were the clamors of the Roman's conscience.

At that instant occurred an incident which, however modern philosophy may interpret it, was to the heathen governor an omen from the gods. Pilate's wife, awakened from a fearful dream, in which the destinies of Jesus were strangely intermingled with their own, sent a warning message to her husband: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," she said, "for I have suffered many things to-day in a dream because of him."‡

A dream to the Roman was like a prophet to the Jew. Nor was the skepticism of these latter days able wholly to resist the inheritance of earlier superstitions. Was it indeed superstition? Or did God in mercy thus re-enforce the faltering conscience of the procurator? However that may be,

* Luke xxiii., 6–12.

† *Παιδεύσας οὖν αὐτὸν ἀπολύσω*, Luke xxiii., 16. *Παιδεύω* is rarely translated chastise, and its more general signification of instruct is more in harmony with the narrative as well as with the Greek. It is inconceivable that Christ was twice scourged. See Townsend's marginal note *in loco*.

‡ Matt. xxvii., 19.

the warning was in vain. Pilate feared the gods, but he feared man more. He would not disregard the one, he dared not offend the other. Compromise is a crime in cases that demand courage. The feeble heart and fertile brain of Pilate invented a new compromise.

Whenever a foreign governor is imposed upon a discontented people, the popular sentiment is always with the lawbreakers. The release of a state prisoner is accepted as a token of imperial benignity. The Roman government added every year to the festivities of the paschal feast by releasing to the people one such prisoner—whomsoever they demanded. Of this custom Pilate sought to avail himself.

Another Jesus, surnamed Barabbas, lay in chains within the fortress walls. "Which Jesus," cried Pilate, shall I release unto you?"

From a thousand voices the reply rolled up, "Away with this man!" and "Release to us Barabbas."*

By this artifice, as unavailing as it was unmanly, Pilate increased the perplexities of his position. By offering to pardon Jesus he reversed his sentence of acquittal. By appealing to the people he tacitly consented to accept their decision.

With this cry now mingled for the first time another one: "Crucify him!" It was not enough that Jesus die. Jewish voices demanded the execution of the Jewish sentence by a Gentile process—a process so barbarous that the Jewish code had never known it, Jewish hands had never executed it.

For two hours Pilate had dallied with this mob. Its unchecked passions, stimulated by priestly appeal, had grown momentarily more furious. The tumult which a few soldiers might easily have quelled at first, had increased to serious proportions. Angry voices caught up this cry of "Crucify him!" and rolled it in tumultuous waves till the very hills echoed with the sound, and nature herself seemed to join in

* Matt. xxvii., 15–23; Mark xv., 6–15; Luke xxiii., 17–23; John xviii., 39, 40.

this rebellion against her Lord. Angry faces glared on the solitary but unmoved prisoner. Angry fists outreached in menace toward him. The feeble protestations of the defeated procurator were drowned in the vehement outcries of the passionate mob. Weakly he attempted to cast the blood of this innocent man upon the people who demanded it. A myriad voices responded, "His blood be on us and on our children." Vainly, in token of his innocence, he washed his hands before them all—hands that have never ceased to be red with the blood of the Son of God. Falteringly he pronounced the sentence which his conscience openly condemned. Reluctantly he released the instigator of sedition, and delivered up to death the Prince of Peace.*

Crucifixion was always preceded by scourging. It was an age of iron, and society had not yet learned to discriminate between punishment and revenge. Cruel hands disrobed the still uncomplaining sufferer. Brawny arms wielded upon his naked back the fearful scourge, whose thongs of leather, loaded with sharp metal, cut at every stroke their bloody furrow in the quivering flesh. This torture, beneath which many a strong man had given up his life, could not extort from the steadfast heart of Jesus a single groan. As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Then on his lacerated body was replaced the cast-off robes of royalty. In cruel jest, the crown of thorns was pressed upon his brow, and a reedy sceptre placed within his hand; and a mimicking crowd, with many a ribald jest, paid to this true king a mocking reverence.†

The royalty of Jesus needed no robe, nor crown, nor courtier to attest it. Through all this bloody disguise that royalty still shone. Even the heart of the old Roman, long used to scenes of cruelty, felt in this scene a new horror. For the delivery of this innocent prisoner he made one new effort. To the impatient crowd he brought forth again the object of their hate. To this face, pale with agony and reddened with

* Matt. xxvii., 24–26. † Matt. xxvii., 26–30.

drops of blood, he pointed, in the hope that his sufferings might awaken their compassion, though his silent grandeur had no power to touch their hearts with awe. "Behold the man!" he cried.

In vain. He but fed the flames he would fain extinguish. It is idle to appeal to the compassion of a mob. A mob unsated has no compassion. Like the lion, it but whets its appetite with the sight of blood.

Sadly a second time Pilate surrenders himself to the passions he has not the manliness to resist. "Take ye him," he cries, "and crucify him; I find no fault in him."

Then at length the emboldened priests, released from their long duplicity, reveal their first, their true indictment. "By our law," they say, "he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

In all that crowd it was reserved for the skeptical Roman to give any credence to that claim. This sentence gives new interpretation to the dread which has possessed him—new meaning to the dream whose warning he has disregarded. This soldier's heart, unused to compassion—this skeptical heart, unused to awe, experiences a new sensation, a strange dread, that demands a reversal of his unjust condemnation.

Oh! for one bold, decisive act. Instead, the pitiable procurator weakly resorts to one more sorry stratagem. To the patriotism of the populace he appeals. To the thorn-crowned, scorn-robed Jesus he points as he cries, "Behold your king!"

But patriotism itself is overborne by passion. The populace deny their nationality, dethrone their God, accept the Gentile sceptre. "We have no king but Cæsar," the priests reply, while they hiss out the threatening menace, "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend."

Of all the Cæsars, Tiberias was the most suspicious and exacting. Of all crimes, that of indifference to his interests was the worst. To his jealous judgment suspicion was evidence. In his tribunal accusation was equivalent to convic-

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tion. Already, in imagination, Pontius Pilate stands before the imperial judgment-seat; already he perceives himself stripped of his robes of office, degraded, dishonored, happy if he deliver his own life. His better nature yields to unmanly fear. For the third time he repeats the sentence of death, now without recall, and Jesus is led away to suffer its infliction.*

There are crises when cowardice is a capital crime. Such a crisis was this. The crime of Pontius Pilate was the crime of cowardice.

Even the inspired pen has not ventured to describe the terrible conflict which rent the hearts of Christ's disciples during this long and bitter struggle. They had certainly witnessed it from the very beginning. One of them, at least, had gained access alike to the court of Caiaphas and the judgment-hall of Pilate. His boldness was that of love, that dares all things. They had never ceased to hope for some strange, perhaps some supernatural deliverance. They had waited, with beating hearts, the issue of the first trial; had exulted in the failure of the priestly prosecutors' case; had listened with reverence, yet with terror, to Jesus's testimony against himself; had shuddered as they saw the rising storm of public execration; had borrowed new hope from every new acquittance by the procurator, and felt a new despair at every new indication of his acquiescence in the demands of the increasing mob. The final sentence must have fallen as a death-knell upon their hearts. The streets of Jerusalem were no longer safe for them. The passions of the populace they dared not face. Not till toward the consummation of the crucifixion did they venture to the cross. No pen can describe the anguish they must have felt as from their temporary retreat they saw their Lord delivered into the hands of the brutal soldiery and yet more brutal populace, and watched with crushed and bleeding hearts the fearful procession to Calvary, the awful march to death.

* John xix., 4–16.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DEATH.*

F all the cruel punishments of a barbaric age, crucifixion was the most barbarous. It possessed a bad pre-eminence of cruelty in an age when fashionable audiences crowded the vast amphitheatre to applaud the fearful horrors of gladiatorial combats, and fair women gave the death-signal, and feasted their sanguinary eyes on the ebbing life of the defeated. It was in this age that Cicero called crucifixion a punishment most inhuman and shocking,† and wrote of it that it should be removed from the eyes, and the ears, and the every thought of men.‡ Too horrible for a Roman citizen, no freeman might be subjected to it. It was reserved, with rare exceptions, for slaves and foreigners.

Upon this Gentile cruelty the Jew looked with special horror. The cross, like the eagle, was a sign of national degradation. Its infliction by the Romans was a badge of Israel's servitude.§ The ancient law of Moses affixed a peculiar curse to it. To crucify even a corpse was to submit it to the greatest possible indignity. Thus the agony of pain was intensified by the agony of its peculiar shame.‖

The physical anguish of the cross was that of a lingering death. The victim's life was wrested from him in a fierce

* Matt. xxvii., 32–61; Mark xv., 21–47; Luke xxiii., 26–56; John xix., 17–42.

† "Crudelissimum teterrimumque supplicium."—Cicero v. Verres.

‡ "Ab oculis, auribusque et omni cogitatione hominum removendum esse."—Cicero v. Verres, quoted in Jahn's Archæology, § 262.

§ Josephus, Antiquities, xvii., 10, § 10; Wars, ii., 12, § 6.

‖ Deut. xxi., 22, 23.

but predetermined battle, that lasted always many hours, often several days. Every moment of this hopeless contest added new agony to an anguish at first almost unendurable.

The form of the Latin cross is as familiar as it is sacred to all Christendom.* The sufferer was usually bound upon it as it lay upon the ground. The hands and feet were then firmly nailed to the wood. Lest this fastening should prove too frail, a transverse piece of wood just below the thigh afforded an additional support. The cross was then elevated, with the sufferer upon it, and fastened firmly in the ground. In this act the body was terribly wrenched. The concussion often dislocated the limbs. Then, hanging between heaven and earth, the victim was left to die. The hot rays of an Oriental sun beat down upon his naked body and unsheltered head. The ragged edges of his undressed wounds festered and inflamed. From these wounds shooting pains ran along in accelerating waves of increasing anguish. Every attempt to secure any relief from the unnaturally constrained position increased the torment. The blood, impeded in its circulation, flowed in slackened and laborious currents. An increasing fever consumed the body with internal fires; the head throbbed with anguish; the parched lips burned with a raging thirst. As death drew nigh, insects swarmed upon the body, and birds of prey commenced to feast upon it before life was yet extinct. Yet no vital organ was directly touched, and the stubborn life surrendered to his invincible foe only after a long and protracted siege. Even the pitiless, stolid Roman endured not long the sight of sufferings at once so protracted and so intense. Rarely was the criminal suffered to die by the mere infliction of the cross. A thrust with the spear or a blow with the club at length put an end to tortures which wearied even the patience of spectators.†

* For illustrations of the different forms of crosses, see M'Clintock and Strong's Biblical Cyclopædia, art. Cross.

† For an account of the character of the sufferings of the cross, see Smith's Bible Dict., art. Crucifixion; Jahn's Archæology, § 262; Stroud's Physical

To this punishment Jesus was condemned. He who came to ransom humanity from penalty, suffered himself the most horrible penalty which humanity, not yet educated in later refinements of cruelty, had then invented.

The place of his execution is not known. Humanity will never forget the scene which makes Calvary the most sacred of all the mountains which heroism has consecrated; but it has already forgotten the exact locality. Golgotha now exists only in the devout imagination of loving hearts. Among all battle-fields about which men delight to gather, upon which they delight to rear the monumental expression of their reverential love, there is none like this; but no monument can ever mark it—no man can ever be sure that his feet press its sacred turf. Of the founder of the new theocracy, as of the founder of the old, it is to be said that the place of his death no man knoweth to this day. It is true that ecclesiastical tradition designates with perfect confidence not only the mount of crucifixion, but the street through which Jesus passed from his trial, and the identical spot at which every minor incident occurred; but these traditionary sites have little to support them but the needs of monkish guides, who trade in the too credulous reverence of Oriental travelers. It is a singular and significant fact that history is unable to fix with precision any of the places which the life of Christ has made forever sacred. The manger where he was cradled, the house where his boyhood was spent, the synagogue where he preached his first discourse, the city consecrated by his earlier ministry, the mount where he preached the great sermon, that whereon he was transfigured in glory, the two halls where his two trials were held, the hill where he was crucified, and the sepulchre where he was buried, are hid by an impenetrable veil from the loving hearts that would hallow every spot Christ has made sacred by his presence. It is better so. Christianity has no holy place. Rather every spot on the

Cause of Christ's Death, chap. iii., and historical cases there cited; Burder's Oriental Literature on Matt. xxvii., 31, and *post*.

round globe since Jesus baptized it with his blood is holy ground.*

A mournful march was that to the hill of death. Jesus, and the two robbers with whom he was to suffer, preceded the informal procession. They were guarded by a quaternion of soldiers from the German legion,† under the command of a centurion. A multitude of Judeans followed, headed by a volunteer delegation of the priestly party. These followed Jesus to the cross less to assure themselves of the execution of the sentence than to enjoy the horrible pleasure of witnessing its infliction.

This was the preparation of these pious prelates for the Sabbath.

It was customary to bear before the prisoner an inscription which designated the crime for which he was condemned. This was subsequently attached to the cross, that his death might be a warning against similar offenses. Pilate had in the case of Jesus written this inscription with his own hand. He wrote it in the three languages of the time—that of the court, Latin; that of the Gentile population, Greek; and that

* The crucifixion was without the city walls (Burder's Oriental Customs, vol. ii., p. 248; John xix., 17; Matt. xxviii., 11; Hebr. xiii., 12), probably near a public highway (Mark xv., 29), near the city (John xix., 20), in the immediate vicinity of one of the gardens which surrounded Jerusalem (John xix., 41), where Joseph of Arimathea had his tomb, was probably the customary place of execution and a well-known spot, as is indicated by the use of the definite article, *τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Κρανίον* (Luke xxiii., 33; John xix., 17; see Andrews's Life of our Lord, p. 559; Smith's Bible Dict., art. Golgotha); probably on a round-shaped hill; this indicated by the title, the place of a skull (Ellicott's Life of Christ, p. 317, note); supposed by Ferguson to be the place now occupied by the Dome of the Rock (Smith's Bible Dict., p. 1030); by Alford and Ellicott the traditional site now occupied by the Holy Sepulchre (Ellicott's Life of Christ, p. 317, note; Alford, Matt. xxvii., 33), a conclusion which I find it impossible to reconcile with the probable boundaries of the ancient city, and which is strongly impugned by Murray (Hand-book for Syria and Palestine, pt. i., p. 149, § 50), Robinson (Researches, vol. ii., p. 69, 80), Stanley (Sinai and Palestine, p. 451 and *post*), Andrews (Life of our Lord, p. 567), all of whom agree with the conclusion stated in the text, that it is impossible to fix on the location with any accuracy or confidence.

† John xix., 23, and Olshausen thereon.

of the Jews, Hebrew, or rather Aramaic. In this respect it resembled all the official notices of the day—those, for example, posted in the Temple courts. The inscription read, "Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews."* This covert raillery against the imperial pretensions of the Jewish nation formed doubtless the subject of many a rude jest among the soldiery. The priesthood felt keenly the humiliation, as the adroit politician meant they should, and begged him to change it; but Pilate, with the obstinacy of a weak nature that yields great principles and is pertinacious of details, refused. With seeming egotism he replied, "What I have written I have written."†

As the procession passed out of the city gates they met a Jewish pilgrim from Africa coming in. The soldiers impressed him into their service, and compelled him to bear the cross. The reason for their doing so is not stated; but Jesus had neither slept nor eaten for twenty-four hours, and the surmise is reasonable which asserts that, faint from want of food and loss of blood, his trembling limbs refused longer to support their heavy burden. This simple incident has given an enviable name to this Simon of Cyrene, of whom history records nothing more than that in this hour of horrors he was permitted to afford some relief to Jesus.‡

Some Judean women mingled in the train which followed Christ, and lamented his sad fate with the usual forms of Jewish mourning. Beating upon their breasts, they filled

* John xix., 19, 20, and Alford thereon. The inscription is differently reported by the different evangelists. This difference, difficult, if not impossible to reconcile with any theory of verbal inspiration, strengthens rather than detracts from the reliability of the account, if the evangelists are supposed to have been left, in minor details, to their own recollection. Townsend (N. T., part vii., n. 24), and apparently Andrews (Life of Our Lord, p. 539), suppose these to be verbatim translations of the different inscriptions. *Contra* Alford (N. T., Matt. xxvii., 37), Robinson (Harmony, § 15, note), Greenleaf (Testimony of the Four Evangelists, § 153, note).

† John xix., 20–23.

‡ Matt. xxvii., 31, 32; Mark xv., 20, 21; Luke xxiii., 26. Compare Romans xvi., 13.

the air with loud and ostentatious outcries.* Possibly his unshaken fortitude appealed to their sympathies. More probably, ignorant of the secret cause of his condemnation, and seeing only the inscription which was carried before him, they mourned this new shame put by Gentile hands upon their nation. It is certain that these daughters of Jerusalem† were not disciples of Christ, since among the Judeans he had few if any disciples—none, certainly, who dared openly lament him. Roman law forbade such lamentations for a criminal. Judea alone possessed even the poor privilege of affording him a decent burial. Usually the body was left to decay upon the cross, as at a later period in England the corpse of the highwayman was suffered to hang upon the cross, a ghastly but ineffectual warning to evil-doers. But it is not in the power of law to restrain the sympathies of women. The tears of these unexpected mourners touched the heart of Jesus. He forgot his own sufferings in the reflection that they would live to see the day when from a thousand crosses erected by the legions of the Roman general around the walls of the doomed city a thousand Jewish corpses would hang in ghastly array, and when from the thundering hosts marching over these same hills for its destruction these mothers and their now infant babes would vainly seek refuge in cellars and subterranean vaults, and beneath falling ruins. "Weep," said he, with touching pathos, "not for me—weep for yourselves and your children."‡

This sentence he still repeats. Christ is not an object of commiseration. It is a shallow heart which simply weeps tears of sentiment over the agony of the cross. Calvary demands not tears of pity for the sorrows of Jesus, but tears of gratitude for the love of Christ, and of penitence for the sins that slew him.

Arrived at the place of execution, for the first time this

* *Εκόπτοντο καὶ ἐφρήνουν αὐτόν*, Luke xxiii., 27. † Luke xxiii., 28.

‡ Luke xxiii., 28–31. For an account of the fulfillment of this prophecy, see Josephus, Wars, v., 11; vi., 8, 9.

scene of accumulated horrors was alleviated by an act of honest but mistaken mercy. An association of women was organized in Jerusalem to alleviate the sufferings of condemned criminals, the germ of the innumerable associations which in later days have relieved the necessary and inexorable punishments of society from the aspects of revenge. They accompanied the accused to the place of crucifixion, and prepared and proffered to him a drink of acid wine mingled with myrrh. This beverage acted as a sort of anodyne, and, blunting the senses, rendered the anguish of death more endurable. For this act they thought they found a command in the precept of Solomon: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts."*

This draught was proffered to Jesus before he was nailed to the cross, perhaps by the very women who had bewailed his death.† He declined to receive it. He would not meet death with a stupefied soul. He demanded that all his powers should be alert in these last moments.

With no gentle hands the stolid soldiers proceeded to the execution of the sentence. Christ was once more disrobed of his garments; a linen cloth was put about his loins; he was extended upon the cross; the nails were then driven through the hands and feet, and the cross itself was elevated with the sacred sufferer upon it. At this moment of anguish was wrung from his lips a cry for mercy—not for himself, but for his executioners. The blows that sent the quivering anguish thrilling through his nerves only awakened a new utterance of his unabated love: "Father," he cried, "forgive them, for they know not what they do."‡

There was not probably on that hill one who realized the full significance of the sublime yet terrible act in which they

* Proverbs xxxi., 6.

† There seems on the whole no adequate reason for supposing that it was offered more than once, or in a spirit of cruel scoffing. The wine and myrrh (Mark xv., 23), and vinegar and gall (Matt. xxvii., 34), probably are the same. See Andrews's Life of Christ, p. 536. *Contra*, Alford *in loco*.

‡ Luke xxiii., 34.

were engaged. To the Roman soldiers Jesus was simply a Galilean zealot; to the Judeans, a blasphemer against their holy religion; to the priesthood, a religious enthusiast. It is doubtful whether even the faith of his disciples was able to endure the test of this dreadful hour. This interceding prayer is limited to no class and to no time. It is Jesus's own interpretation of the cross. From this sacred mount this intercession of his love—"Father, forgive," goes on still sounding through the centuries, never to cease so long as sin needs sacrifice for its atonement.

On the soldiers this prayer made absolutely no impression. The clothing of the criminals was a perquisite of the guards. They sat down coolly and began to divide their booty. They had a flask of wine with them, of which they drank from time to time. The tunic of Jesus was a seamless robe, woven probably of woolen, and apparently of fine texture. It is hardly too much to surmise that it may have been the work of some of the loving hands of the women that ministered to him in Galilee. They were reluctant to rend it. Some one proposed that they play for it. One of the company produced his dice, the Roman substitute for modern cards, and they began their game. Nothing could more significantly indicate the singular insensibility of these soldiers than this scene of gambling beneath the very shadow of the cross.*

A little way from them was a very different group. Some heroic hearts beating beneath womanly bosoms were witnesses of this scene of suffering. Among them was Jesus's own mother. With a true mother's heart, she was scarce able to endure the sight, but still less able to withdraw from it. She was supported by her nephew, Jesus's most tried and trusty friend. Through all the scenes of the dreadful night and yet more dreadful day, John had not been far distant from his Lord. To this group Jesus directed his eyes. The anguish of the mother, who now realized the prophecy uttered thirty years before—"Yea, a sword shall pierce

* Matt. xxvii., 35, 36; Mark xv., 24; Luke xxiii., 34; John xix., 23, 24.

through thy own soul also,"* touched his heart—that heart which no anguish of his own could move. In faltering accents he commended the broken-hearted mother to the unswerving friend: "Woman — behold — thy son. Son — behold—thy mother."†

If any one were entitled to the rank of primacy in the Church of Christ, this incident would bestow it upon John, thus appointed to the place of Jesus.

Christ's uncomplaining fortitude only irritated his priestly persecutors. Calmness always exasperates the enraged. They attempted to provoke by taunts some response from his hitherto sealed lips. They derided his claim to be the Son of God, and mockingly declared that if he would come down from the cross they would then believe in him. Pilgrims passing to and from the city through one of the great thoroughfares which led by the hill of execution joined in these taunts. They repeated derisively one of his prophecies, distorted to serve their purpose—"Thou that destroyed the Temple and buildedst it in three days, save thyself," they cried. The soldiers, too, made merry over his royal pretensions.‡

Among these taunts there was one which must have stung even his calm heart. It was openly and scornfully asserted that God had deserted him. Doubtless not only to these mocking priests, but to all the people, in some measure to the disciples themselves, this seemed true. That dishonor should thus be brought on the name of his Father must have touched him no less keenly than the similar reproaches of those who scornfully asked David in his trouble, Where is now thy God? But he made no response. To every taunt, as to every accusation, he still interposed the same sublime silence.

On the other hand, one of these jibes was an unconscious testimony to the unselfishness of his love. "He saved oth-

* Luke ii., 35. † John xix., 26, 27.
‡ Matt. xxvii., 39–44; Mark xv., 29–32; Luke xxiii., 35–37.

ers," cried the jesting priests, "himself he can not save." This, alas! was true. Only by sacrificing himself could Jesus save mankind.

Though thus apparently insensitive to reproach, his heart responded instantly to any appeal for help. Two robbers, it is said, were crucified with Jesus. Of their history little is known. It is certain that they were brigands* rather than thieves. The indications are that they were Galilean zealots, believed in a coming Judaic kingdom, made their patriotism a cover for robbery and murder, and had finally been arrested and condemned for participation in an outbreak in Jerusalem itself. One of these men, in that spirit of bravado which often characterizes the lower class of criminals, joined in the mockery with the multitude. "If," said he, "you are the Messiah, save both yourself and us, your friends and comrades." The other had a real, though doubtless ignorant faith in a future kingdom. Indignant at the implication that Jesus was a ringleader in these scenes of violence, he rebuked his comrade in crime. He bore witness to his own guilt and to Jesus's innocence. At the same time, he appealed to Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. His contrition was not very deep nor his faith very intelligent, but he showed a real regret for his past life, a real desire for something better. Jesus demanded nothing more. He had received in silence the taunts of the one; he instantly responded with a promise of pardon and redemption to the appeal of the other. "To-day," said he, "shalt thou be with me in Paradise."†

Thus slowly rolled the hours of agony away—hours in which every moment seemed an age. To the waiting disciples it must have seemed as though the miracle of Moses was repeated, and the sun was supernaturally halted in the heavens to prolong the anguish of their dying Lord. But he never complained. No word, no murmur escaped his lips. Once only he spoke of his thirst. A soldier, more com-

* Greek *οἱ λῃσταί*, Matt. xxvii., 44. † Luke xxiii., 39–43.

passionate than his fellows, dipped a sponge in the sour wine which they were drinking and put it to his lips.* This was just before his death.

Meanwhile a new element of horror was added to the scene. Three hours Jesus had been upon the cross, and the sun had but just passed the zenith, when a preternatural night seemed to gather over Calvary. Dark masses of waterless clouds gathered slowly, and, filling the air with a murky darkness, gradually obscured the sun. A supernatural twilight clothed every thing in an awe-inspiring indistinctness. The silent birds hurried, stricken with strange fear, to their nests. In the neighboring city the lamps were lighted at midday. The Temple service ceased, or was carried on amid a gloom that added intensity to its deep solemnity. A heavy atmosphere oppressed the lungs with a strange sense of suffocation. That singular feeling of hopeless insecurity which always precedes the earthquake oppressed all hearts.† In groups the people gathered to speak in subdued tones of the meaning of this evil portent. Perhaps even now and then the listening ear caught the muttered thunder of the earth in travail, a sound more solemn and awe-inspiring than the loudest peal of heaven's artillery. And still, amid the gathering gloom, these three figures hung in solemn silence—the taunts of the people hushed, the dice of the boisterous soldiers laid aside. And still John and his adopted mother watched with patient and unfearing, but awe-stricken hearts, what the end might be.‡

A heavier, darker shadow fell on the heart of Jesus. Once more the sins of a whole world were laid upon his shoulders, and borne in silent grief by his struggling heart. Once more

* John xix., 28, 29. See Alford's note thereon.

† For an indication that this darkness was a premonition of an approaching earthquake, see Matt. xxvii., 51. For evidence that such a phenomenon often accompanies earthquakes, see Stroud on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, note vi., p. 420–446.

‡ John xix., 35 is a sufficient evidence that they did not leave the scene till after Jesus's death.

the prayer of his soul seemed to fail in its upward flight. Bearing in his own heart the burden of our sins, he suffered in that moment the inevitable penalty, banishment from the presence of that Father in whom he trusted. The bitter conflict of the garden was fought again—fought alone; fought at an hour when exhausted nature no longer had the power to sustain the soul in its terrible agony. In that moment the whole battle of his life culminated in one concentrated, but short and decisive struggle. The heart that had borne unmoved all that the hate of man could heap upon him, beat quick with anguish in this crisis, when, bowed down by the burden of human guilt, and environed by an indescribable spiritual darkness, it seemed as though the taunts of his foes were true, and his heavenly Father had indeed abandoned him. From the lips from which no mortal pain could extort a single groan, this more than mortal, this inexplicable agony of a sin-pierced soul wrung a cry of commingled faith and despair—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" This burden was more than the heart, already overtaxed with mental anguish, could bear. A sudden sense of faintness proclaimed to him that release had come at last. The quickened pulsation of that moment of concentrated agony had sundered the heart-strings of the Savior of mankind. With a voice clear and full to the last, he proclaimed his victory over death, his completion of his divine mission of suffering love: "It is finished." In a prayer of victorious faith he commended his spirit to the keeping of his heavenly Father. Then his head drooped upon his breast, and all was over.*

It was three o'clock—the hour of the evening sacrifice.

At the same moment the long-presaged earthquake came. The earth trembled as in repressed horror. Rocks were cleft in twain as with a knife. Graves opened, and some slumbering dead came forth. The Temple itself felt the shock that

* Matt. xxvii., 45–50; Mark xv., 33–37; Luke xxiii., 44 46; John xix., 28–30.

foretold its mission ended and its hour of destruction come, and the veil which hid the Holy of Holies from the common gaze was rent from top to bottom. Then the sun, breaking through the clouds, looked down with a smile of heaven's love upon the scene of crucifixion, and bathed in a glory that time has never dimmed the silent form of the victorious sufferer.

The priests had already left the hill of execution. The centurion and the soldiers alone remained. Awe-stricken not less by the sublimity of Christ's death* than by the supernatural portents which accompanied it,† they testified their sense of his divinity even in his death by the public but tardy confession, "Truly this was the Son of God."

When, an hour or two later, the soldiers, in compliance with the commands of the procurator, proceeded to put an end to the lingering tortures of the condemned, Jesus was evidently dead. The guard, under Roman law, answered for their prisoners with their life. To prevent the possibility of error, one of the soldiers thrust his spear into Jesus's side. Clots of extravasated blood and water flowed from the wound. The heart, already weakened by the agony in the garden, had broken beneath the greater agony of Calvary. It was not the protracted anguish of the cross that slew Jesus. Rarely, if ever, did the victim of crucifixion perish in less than twenty-four hours. It was not the spear-thrust of the soldier. He was then already dead. It was the inexplicable anguish of bearing the sins of the whole world. Exhausted by the vigils of the night before, the spiritual agony of that hour seems to have ruptured his heart. Literally, it was the sins for which he was sacrificed that slew him. Literally, he died at last of a broken heart.‡

Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy and honored member of the Sanhedrim, hitherto a secret disciple of Jesus, but after his death a disciple in secret no longer, demanded the body

* Mark xv., 39. † Matt. xxvii., 54.

‡ John xix., 34. See note at end of this chapter.

THE MARYS AT THE TOMB.

of his Lord from Pilate. The procurator, surprised to learn that Jesus was already dead, readily granted the request. The councilor's summer garden was near the place of execution. His family tomb was in the midst of it. It had never been used. The body of Jesus was taken from the cross, partially, but of necessity hurriedly prepared for burial, and laid here to rest over the Sabbath.

As the twilight of that Friday evening gathered over this garden, the moon looked down upon two veiled figures, mourners of their Lord—Mary Magdalene, and Mary, mother of Jesus.* The one loved him with the ardor of a mother's heart, the other with the ardor of one rescued from a living death by his all-powerful words. They had accounted him the Lord of glory. They had seen him crowned only in derision, and had followed him only to the tomb. They sat weeping at his grave. Their perplexed faith had no illumination of hope to offer to their desolated hearts. Religion itself had for them, in this hour of their Master's death, no consolations. And late into the night these silent friends, bound together closer than ever in the companionship of a common woe, sat weeping at the grave of their Lord the tears of an irremediable grief.

To them the life of Jesus was ended. Really his life now truly begun; for the cross signalizes the advent of that immortal life of love upon earth which will never cease its sway so long as men have hearts to answer to the touch of infinite divine compassion.

To Thee, O eternal Son of God, thy Father addresses with a different meaning the words which thou didst speak to thy slumbering disciples in the garden. "Sleep on, now, and take thy rest"—rest from the life of humiliation and anguish which thou hast voluntarily endured for the sake of sinful humanity. "Rise; let us go hence"—hence from the earthly shame to the everlasting glory; from bearing for a few brief hours the cross of love to wear forever its unfading crown.

* Matt. xxvii., 61.

NOTE.

The immediate cause of Christ's death is veiled in obscurity. The reasons for the opinion stated in the text can only be very briefly stated here. Crucifixion produced a very lingering death. No vital organ was directly affected. The victim rarely died in less than twenty-four hours. Instances are recorded of his lingering a full week. It was customary to dispatch the condemned after a few hours of torture by speedier means. This was done in the case of the thieves. Pilate was surprised at the intelligence that Jesus was already dead. The guard seems to have shared that surprise. Up to the last moment there was no sign of weakness, no decay of power or vitality. Jesus conversed with the thief, and spoke to his friends. His last cry was not that of exhausted nature. He cried with a loud—literally great, *i. e.* strong—voice. His death was instant. There was in it something remarkable—something which attracted the attention of the centurion and his band. It followed immediately after the cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" This agony succeeded that of Gethsemane. In that midnight struggle the heart and blood-vessels were affected. The palpitation of the heart was so intense as to cause bloody sweat—a phenomenon rare, but not unknown, and produced by intense mental excitement. That this was truly bloody sweat, see Alford *in loco*. The heart would probably have been weakened by such an experience. A repetition of the agony then endured might truly rupture the membrane of the heart. Such an experience has been known to produce such a result. If it did, death would instantly ensue. The blood would flow into the pericardium, an outer sac in which the heart is inclosed. There it would be liable to separate very rapidly into clots of extravasated blood and water. When the soldier thrust the spear into Jesus's side, it was probably with a double purpose: to ascertain whether Jesus was dead; to insure his death if he were not. For this purpose he would aim at the heart. The spear would pierce, of course, the left, not the right side, as portrayed in nearly all art representations of the crucifixion. The water, followed and accompanied by the clots of blood, would flow from the wound. It is impossible to account for this phenomenon, not only recorded by John, but evidently regarded by him of considerable importance, except upon the hypothesis of a broken heart, or of some previous organic disease. Andrews's hypothesis that it was supernatural has nothing but a devout surmise to sustain it. The reader who desires to investigate this subject more thoroughly will find by far the fullest and ablest discussion of it in Stroud's Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, London, 1847, especially chap. iv., p. 73–156, and notes iv. and v., p. 389–420. If this is not within his reach, he will find a brief but adequate statement of the argument in M'Clintock and Strong's Biblical Cyclopædia, art. Crucifixion.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHOSE SON IS HE?

ENTENCE of death was pronounced against Jesus, as we have seen, by two separate tribunals, on two distinct charges. By the Jewish court he was condemned for blasphemy; by the Roman judge for sedition. Both were, by the laws of the respective nationalities, capital offenses.

The impartial historian, reviewing the proceedings in this case, must afford his readers the material for coming to an independent conclusion concerning not only the regularity, but the justice of these proceedings. He must afford them some information concerning the statute under which the courts acted, and the grounds on which they themselves based their action.

The injustice of the second judgment is indeed too palpable to require exposure. It was wrested from a reluctant judge by a violent mob. Six times Pilate declared the prisoner guilty of no offense, and at last sentenced him to death, and pronounced him innocent at the same moment. Nothing could have been farther from the purpose of Jesus than any violent interference with the political organization of Palestine; nothing farther from his sympathy than the factions, whose growing turbulence was prophetic of the dreadful scenes of carnage in which the ancient commonwealth of Israel was finally and forever extinguished.

The other charge requires a more careful consideration.

Blasphemy, in the Hebrew theocracy, was a far more serious crime than it is in the American Republic. Jehovah was, in a peculiar sense, the King of the Jews. He framed

their original Constitution. He promulgated their first laws. He appointed, at the outset, their chief officers. In him was vested the title to all the land. The people were tenants at his pleasure.* When the form of government was changed, its essential character remained still the same. The monarchy was still a theocracy. The kings were the Lord's anointed. They governed in his stead; and their decrees, issued in his name, were supported by at least the supposed sanction of his authority. The whole theory of Hebraism was tersely expressed in the phrase, "The Lord is king."

Under such a Constitution, to do aught to diminish the reverence with which his name was invested, or to turn the hearts of the people from their complete allegiance to him, was a capital crime. It answered to the *crimen majestis* of the Roman, to the *præmunire* of English jurisprudence. It was an offense alike against Church and State. It was not only irreligion, it was treason.

This was blasphemy, the greatest crime known to the Mosaic code. Its statutory books are full of the most explicit provisions against every form of this offense. Care was taken to invest the name of Jehovah with awe, and his will with a supreme authority. The first provision of the fundamental Constitution was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The second guarded against degrading conceptions of his person by forbidding all sensuous representations of him. No picture, no image was ever permitted to depict him to the imagination. No man might ever speak his name irreverently, or use it in light and trivial conversation.† No prophet might teach in any other name than his. No man might work real or pretended miracles under guise of any other than divine authority. No teacher might propose for the worship of the people any other deity.‡

Any infraction of these statutes, in whatever form, was punished with death. For attempting to turn the allegiance

* See *ante*, chap. ii., p. 29, and notes.

† Exod. xx., 1–7.

‡ *Ante*, chap. ii., p. 35, note **.

of the people from Moses, Korah and his companions were swallowed by the open-mouthed earth.* For striking the rock and bringing forth the water without giving God praise, Moses died in the wilderness, forbidden to enter the land to the borders of which he had conducted Israel.† For preaching and practicing the worship of a false god the priests of Baal were slain by the swords of the prophet Elijah and the people.‡ In the degeneracy of the age other enactments had become obsolete. But these provisions of their ancient law had been invested with additional sanctity by Jewish history. Again and again Israel had suffered them to be disregarded. They had listened to the teaching of false prophets. They had followed false gods. And they had invariably paid the penalty of their transgression. War, pestilence, and famine had in turn ravaged their land. At length they had learned the lesson of undivided allegiance. Neither blandishments nor persecutions were able to swerve them from at least a formal following of Jehovah. Antiochus Epiphanes had placed his image in the Temple, and demanded adoration for it. This sacrilege had fired the Jewish heart as all previous cruelties had been unable to do, and had given rise to the bloody, and, for a time, successful revolution under the Maccabees. Caligula had decreed that his deification, enacted by the Roman senate, be confirmed by the Jewish nation. The hopeless but desperate resistance of the people, who submitted to every other demand, ceased only with the death of the impious emperor. No crime did Jewish blood avenge with passions so quick and hot as the crime of blasphemy.

It was of this crime Jesus was accused. It was stated that in his own name he promulgated laws in violation of the plain spirit, if not of the positive statute of the Mosaic code; that in his own name he wrought miracles in contravention of its various provisions against witchcraft and sorcery; and that in his own name he taught in violation of one of its explicit laws. The priests scouted the idea that Jesus

* Numb. xvi. † Numb. xx., 7–12. ‡ 1 Kings xviii.

was any thing more than a Galilean Rabbi. It is difficult to see how, if they had been right, he could have been successfully defended from these charges.

But these charges paled before the far more serious charge preferred against him of attempting directly to divert the allegiance of the people from Jehovah to himself. The laws against blasphemy constituted an important exception to the right of free speech so carefully guarded by the Jewish Constitution. An explicit statute forbade any man from preaching any other gods than Jehovah. He might prophesy truly. He might authenticate his mission by apparent miracles. This could not avail him. If he preached another god than the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; another god than him under whom Israel had been emancipated in Egypt, delivered in the wilderness, and brought through varied experiences to the promised land, he must die.

This statute is so important to a proper consideration of this case that we give it entire.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them,' thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee."*

* Deut. xiii., 1–5.

It is true that modern philosophy may question the policy, or even the justice of such an enactment. It does not accord with those principles of free religious thought which, in the nineteenth century, allows to false religion and to a false political philosophy the same freedom of debate which it concedes to the true. But our own national history has illustrated the truth that there are exigencies when public interests demand the repression of private freedom in speech; and it may well be doubted whether the best interests of the Hebrew nation, just emerging from servitude, did not require that they should be guarded by constitutional enactment from false teachers. However that may be, this was a part of the law of the land. The Sanhedrim were appointed to maintain, not to modify it. The only question before the court of Caiaphas was, "Is the prisoner at the bar guilty of a violation of this statute?" The only question before the court of History is the justice of the sentence pronounced thereon.

It is true there were serious informalities in the trial. To these we have already adverted. These affect, however, only the regularity of the procedure.

The statute forbade any prophet from preaching any other god than Jehovah.

Jesus was charged with having proclaimed himself a god.

What were the facts?

Jesus commenced his ministry by a simple announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But a marked change soon characterized his preaching. Gradually, and with ever-growing distinctness, he pointed to himself as the king who had come to establish that kingdom of God which John had only foretold. This change, already indicated in the course of our history, need be only briefly recalled. All the prerogatives of divine royalty he had assumed—legislative, executive, and judicial functions. In nearly all his parables he had pointed to himself as the central object in the new theocracy;* he had claimed a rank superior to that ac-

* *Ante*, chap. xx., p. 288.

corded to the heroes of Israel's ancient history—Abraham, David, Solomon, Jonah;* he pronounced absolution of sins;† he invested his disciples with authority to pardon in his name;‡ he defended himself from the charge of Sabbath-breaking, because, as the Son of God, he possessed the rights of his heavenly Father;§ he declared in direct language that he and that Father were one.‖

To his own disciples he spoke in language not more unambiguous, but more frequently repeated. Three of them he took with him to the Mount of Transfiguration, that they might hear the divine voice saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him."¶ At the close of the first apostolic tour, he asked their report as to the popular opinion respecting him. Peter's declaration of their own faith that he was a divine Messiah elicited no rebuke, but a warm approval, and an emphatic declaration that this living faith should be the rock foundation of his future Church.** As his ministry drew to a close, these utterances became more frequent and more emphatic. He is the light of the world;†† he is the way by which alone the eternal Father can be approached;‡‡ he is the bread of life;§§ the true manna;‖‖ the vine on which all others are but branches.¶¶ On him his disciples are to feed; in him alone do they have life.*** He is the Good Shepherd of whom David sang, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."††† He is the door of the fold, by which alone man enters into eternal life: Whosoever climbeth up by any other way, the same is a thief and a robber.‡‡‡ He is not of this world. The people, with whom he never identifies himself, are from beneath, but he is from above.§§§ He surrenders his own life; he takes it again in

* John viii., 58; Matt. xxii., 42–45; Matt. xii., 41, 42. † Mark ii., 5.
‡ Matt. xvi., 19. § John v., 17. ‖ John x., 30.
¶ Luke ix., 35. ** Matt. xvi., 13–20. †† John viii., 12.
‡‡ John xiv., 6. §§ John vi., 35. ‖‖ John vi., 58.
¶¶ John xv., 1–5. *** John vi., 47, 54. ††† John x., 11, 14.
‡‡‡ John x., 1–9. §§§ John viii., 23.

the hour of resurrection.* His is the voice at which the dead who are in their graves will rise from death.† He is the one who will come in the clouds of his glory to "judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth."‡ Of all his followers he demands the absolute allegiance which the Hebrews paid to God alone. They are to follow in his footsteps; are to share his cross;§ are to keep his commandments;‖ are to honor him as they honor the Father; to love him as they love the Father; to trust in him as they trust in the Father.¶ He that reverences him reverences the Father; he that hates him hates the Father;** he that has seen him has seen the Father, for he is in the Father, and the Father in him;†† and, finally, in the hour of his trial, disdaining to retract or to interpret away these assertions, he embodies and combines them in the one solemn declaration that he is the Messiah of prophecy, the Son of God, and the final judge of all mankind.‡‡

In the light of these facts, it is impossible to defend the son of Mary from the charge of blasphemy on any other ground than that he was the Son of God. This was his own defense. He would recognize no other.

If he had been only a Galilean Rabbi, these claims would have violated the statute. That his teachings had been accompanied by moral precepts of the most exalted and beneficent character does not affect the question. That they had received the sanction of miracles, as wonderful for the love as for the power they displayed, did not, as we have seen, exempt him from the penalties of the Jewish law. He could claim exemption only upon the ground, which he never ceased to maintain while he lived, and in attestation of which he finally died, that he was not a prophet, but the Jehovah of the Old Testament in a new and more glorious manifesta-

* John x., 18. † John v., 28. ‡ Matt. xxiv., 30; Psalm xcvi., 13.
§ Matt. xvi., 24. ‖ John xiv, 15.
¶ John v., 23; viii., 42; xiv., 1. ** John xv., 23.
†† John xiv., 9, 10. ‡‡ Matt. xxvi., 63, 64.

tion than was ever afforded by the burning bush, or the pillar of cloud and fire, or the angel messenger, or the prophet's dream. "It is not easy," says one of America's most distinguished jurists, "to perceive on what ground his conduct could have been defended before any tribunal except upon that of his superhuman character. No lawyer, it is conceived, would think of placing his defense upon any other basis."*

The possibility of his possessing a superhuman character the Sanhedrim refused to consider. This was their guilt. For this they are condemned by the universal judgment of mankind. For this they must answer before the bar of Almighty God.

Impartial history, then, must reply that the question of the justice of Jesus's condemnation depends upon the judgment which is formed of his character. If he had been only a Galilean Rabbi, the tribunal of history could not rightfully reverse that of Caiaphas. In the mausoleum of the noble dead there is no place to erect, by the side of Confucius of China, Buddha of India, and Socrates of Greece, a statue to the memory of Jesus of Nazareth. He is either the Son of God or he was a false prophet; he was either more than a philosopher or less than a true man. Between the faith which bows before his shrine and the philosophy which confirms the sentence pronounced by the Jewish Sanhedrim there is no alternative. He is worthy of worship, or he is guilty of death.

In a word, one must be either a Jew or a Christian.

* Greenleaf, Testimony of the Four Evangelists, Appendix, Note iv., p. 526.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RESURRECTION.*

FROM the twilight of the sixth day to the dawn of the first day of the week was the Jewish Sabbath. The disciples did not yet comprehend the liberty with which Christ had made them free. Their Jewish prejudices prevented them from consecrating its holy hours to offices even so sacred as the embalming of the body of their Lord and Master. The priests were not, however, prevented from applying on the Sabbath for a guard to watch the tomb. Since the priesthood would not have scrupled to contrive a fictitious resurrection if it had served their purpose, their fears that such a deception might be attempted by the disciples was probably not feigned, but real. Pilate referred them to their own Temple police, and with this they were obliged to be content.†

The women who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem, and stood weeping beside his cross, watched for the rising sun, unable to sleep, and as its first rays began to speck the east with gray on the first day of the week, they started for the sepulchre to complete the work of love which the setting sun of Friday had interrupted. When they came to the tomb, they were surprised to find the stone rolled away. Looking in, they perceived a young man sitting there clothed in a long white garment. The body of Jesus was gone. This apparition, which they took to be an angel, spoke to them—reminded them of Christ's prophecy of his death and promise

* Matt. xxvii., 62–66; xxviii.; Mark xvi.; Luke xxiv.; John xx.; xxi.; Acts i., 3–11; 1 Cor. xv., 3–7.

† Matt. xxvii., 62–66.

of his resurrection, and bid them go and inform the disciples that he was risen from the dead.*

It is not woman's nature to investigate critically; she lives by faith and hope. Without stopping, therefore, to examine any farther—filled with awe and wonder at the occurrence, which yet they were far from comprehending, the women hastened back to their Galilean friends to communicate the good news to them. Their message was received with utter incredulity. To these men this wondrous story was only the offspring of a woman's imagination. "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."† Only two of them, Peter and John, thought the matter of sufficient account to be worth investigation.

They started at once for the sepulchre. Notwithstanding Peter's ardent temperament, John outran him. Mary Magdalene accompanied them. They looked into the case more narrowly; went into the tomb; saw that the body was gone; observed that the linen clothes in which it had been wrapped were laid carefully by, but saw nothing of any angel; and concluding, perhaps, that in the indistinctness of the dawn the women had mistaken these clothes for a spirit robed in white, and had imagined the rest, departed, perplexed, if not confirmed in their original skepticism.‡

This revulsion, this second crucifixion of her hopes, was more than Mary Magdalene could bear. She remained at the tomb to weep at this new distress, for now, despite the angel-vision, she was convinced that the too-joyful tidings of a resurrection had raised only a false hope, and that the tomb had been rifled of its contents by a hate which even the cruel cross could not satiate. Nor was it till Jesus appeared to her in person, pronounced in well-remembered accents her name, and thus disclosed himself to her wondering faith and love, that she at last really apprehended that her Lord was not dead, but was risen victor over even death and the tomb.§

* Matt. xxviii., 1–7; Mark xvi., 1–8; Luke xxiv., 1–8.
† Luke xxiv., 11. ‡ Luke xxiv., 12; John xx., 3–10. § John xx., 11–18.

But her report of this confirmation of her original tidings met from the disciples no better reception than her first account. Their grief was inconsolable. "She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept; and they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not."*

It was the same day that two of the disciples, going from Jerusalem to Emmaus,† a little village about seven and a half miles distant, fell in with a stranger on the road, to whom they told their grief. They had hoped that Jesus was he who should have redeemed Israel. This hope they had been compelled to abandon, though they still accounted him a prophet unjustly put to death. They told him, too, the women's story of the apparition at the sepulchre, and their astonishment and perplexity. He entered into conversation with them, and explained from Moses and the prophets the true nature of the deliverance which the Messiah should bring. When finally they reached their destination, he accepted their urgent invitation to share their hospitality for the night, and sat down with them to their evening meal. But in the moment of the breaking of bread, this stranger guest dropped the disguise beneath which he had hidden himself, appeared to their astonished gaze the Jesus with whom they had so often sat at meat, then vanished from their sight. Unable to sleep, they returned at once to Jerusalem to testify to what they had seen.‡ Their story, however, was received with the same incredulity with which they had received that of Mary Magdalene. "They went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them."§ Evidently these disciples were not expecting a resurrection, nor prepared to believe it without the most convincing proof.

That proof, however, was now afforded to them.

* Mark xvi., 10, 11.

† The site of Emmaus is unknown. It is not to be confounded with another village of the same name on the plains of Philistia.

‡ Luke xxiv., 13–35.

§ Mark xvi., 13.

For, while they were still discussing this matter, suddenly, though the doors were closed, Jesus appeared in their midst. So little had their minds apprehended the reality of his resurrection, that they at first supposed that they had seen a spirit; nor were they reassured until he had pointed out his wounded hands and feet, and partaken of some simple food before them all.*

Thomas was not with his companions at this time, and Thomas was a Rationalist. No testimony could suffice to convince him of a fact which lay beyond the horizon of his own experience. When the other disciples, therefore, said to him, "We have seen the Lord," he replied, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." This demand for ocular demonstration of spiritual truth Jesus never regarded when it came from his foes. But Thomas united a loving heart with a skeptical head. Doubt was constitutional with him. A fourth time, therefore, Jesus appeared to the disciples, stood in their midst, and bid Thomas touch the wounded hands and side. Even the doubts of Thomas could not resist the compassionate tenderness of Christ's love, and, refusing to lay unholy hands upon that holy form, he uttered, in an ecstasy of reverential gratitude, those words with which the Christian Church has ever since addressed its Redeemer—"My Lord and my God."†

Although in these interviews Jesus had indicated the future mission of his apostles, and had promised them divine power for its accomplishment, they evidently little understood the work which lay before them. They still, indeed, remained together, united more by past associations than by any prospective plans. But, returning to Galilee, they resumed their old avocation—fishing. Here, for the fifth time, Jesus appeared to them, shared with them their morning meal, and entered into lengthy conversation with them.‡

* Mark xvi., 14–18; Luke xxiv., 36–49; John xx., 19–23, 1 Cor. xv., 5.
† John xx., 24–29.
‡ John xxi., 1–24.

Of these appearances we have detailed and specified accounts. Of other appearances the apostles make briefer mention. Once he met some of them in the way;* once he was seen of James; again of Peter; again by a congregation of over five hundred;† again he met the eleven among the mountains of Galilee;‡ and, finally, gathering his apostles near Bethany, not far from the place where his greatest triumph had been witnessed and his greatest sufferings had been endured, while they beheld him, "he was parted from them and carried up into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight."§

It is evident, from this brief resumé of the evangelical narratives, that the fact of the resurrection is attested, not by persons predisposed to believe in it, but by skeptical critics hard to be convinced. The disciples were, in truth, utterly disheartened by the death of Christ. Their hopes were crushed, their faith shattered, and they themselves stupefied, not more by the crucifixion of their Lord than by the utter destruction of their expectations. They could not have understood Christ's promises of his resurrection, since they never apprehended his prophecies of his death. They no longer believed him to be the Messiah. They received with utter incredulity the marvelous story of his reappearance after his crucifixion. The phenomenon of his resurrection was subjected to a most searching scrutiny by most incredulous critics, and was received only after repeated, ocular, and convincing demonstrations. Not until he had appeared to them half a score or more of times, talked with them, partaken of their hospitality, and showed them, as indubitable evidences of his identity, the wounds in his hands, and feet, and side, did they really believe he was risen from the dead. So marked and so stubborn was their incredulity that Christ more than once tenderly upbraided them with their unbelief.‖

* Matt. xxviii., 9, 10. † 1 Cor. xv., 5–7.
‡ Matt. xxviii., 16, 17. § Luke xxiv., 50, 51; Acts i., 9–11.
‖ Mark xvi., 14; Luke xxiv., 25–28, 38, 39, 44; John xx., 27.

But when at length they were convinced of the fact, it wrought a marvelous change in them. Hitherto they had shared the universal expectations of their contemporaries. They had anticipated a political redemption—a restoration of the Hebrew theocracy. Even in their last triumphal march to Jerusalem they had thought the kingdom of God would immediately appear. Even during the Last Supper they innocently produced two swords for the defense of their master. All his explanations of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, all his prophecies of his sufferings and death, had fallen upon dull ears. "They understood none of these things."

The resurrection of Jesus seems first to have opened their eyes to the true significance of his character and his mission. Now, for the first time, they began to appreciate the work to which he had called them. Now, too, he indicated that work in language clearer than he had ever used before. He interpreted to them the true meaning of his sacrificial sufferings. He canceled the limitations which he had attached to their first mission, and bid them "go among all nations" and "preach the Gospel unto every creature." The ordinance of baptism, which before he had only permitted, he now re-established and clothed with a new significance; and while he was received out of their *sight*, he gave that promise which, throughout all ages, has been fulfilled to *faith* among all his disciples, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

This mission now at length apprehending, they joyfully accepted. Disheartened by the death of Christ, they became for a time simple Galilean fishermen again. Revived by his reappearance, they were transformed by faith in his resurrection into the moral revolutionists of the world. They abandoned once more their boats and nets to become "fishers of men." They laid aside their old prejudices, and preached the glad tidings of a Messiah to the despised Gentiles. The

* Mark xvi., 15–20; Luke xxiv., 45–49; Matt. xxviii., 16–20.

very cross which the priests had made the instrument of Jesus's death they employed as the instrument of the world's salvation; while in inspired forms which time can never dim, they recorded, for the benefit of all future generations, the things which he had commanded them. The fact is indubitable, however the phenomenon may be explained, that Jesus crucified has arisen from the tomb, and lives to-day in greater power than any he ever manifested while in human form he walked the earth.

This faith in a risen Savior the disciples have communicated to an incredulous world. The evidences which convinced them have been equally satisfactory to the great majority of mankind; and after subjecting the statements of the evangelists to a most rigid and often inimical examination, only an exceedingly small minority have been found to doubt the fact of the resurrection, the natural sequel of a life so extraordinary as that of Christ's, the only rational explanation of a power so great as Christianity has proved itself to be. An enduring and extraordinary monument witnesses to this most stupendous event. Nothing is so difficult to change as the conventional customs of the Church. But the Sabbath of Judaism is supplanted by the Sabbath of Christianity. The rest-day of creation gives way, by the almost universal consent of mankind, to one which celebrates the day when Jesus of Nazareth rose from the tomb. Thus, by a provision so marvelous as to be almost miraculous, every recurring week brings a new witness to the sublimest fact of history, that "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."*

We have traced the life of Jesus from Bethlehem to Calvary. We have seen him growing in favor with God and with man. We have listened to his teachings with reverent attention, deepening into awe as he has spoken in tones of divine indignation of the certainty of divine judgment. We

* 1 Cor. xv., 20.

have seen him unmoved alike by the applause of his Galilean audiences and by the execrations of the Judean mob. We have watched him with beating hearts in the battle of the wilderness and in the agony of the garden, conscious that these deeper experiences of his tempest-tossed soul our souls can never truly apprehend. We have seen his immeasurable love misapprehended by his friends, and repaid by his foes with scorn, with contumely, and with the cruel cross. Our own hearts have shared the sorrow of his disciples as with reverent hands they have laid his body in the tomb; and their exultation, as with wondering faith they have received him again, risen from it. Yet in all this way we have never ceased to be conscious that, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our eyes have been holden, and that, however our hearts have burned within us at his words and presence, we have never truly seen him as he is, nor ever can, till that which is perfect is come, and we see no longer in a glass darkly, but face to face.

And yet we have not read the full story of his life; for that life knows no end.

Among his last and most precious promises was his declaration that he would not leave his disciples orphans—that he would come again to them. Still, where two or three are gathered together in his name is he in the midst of them. Still is he Immanuel—God with us. Still Mary sits at his feet, and Martha busies herself in his service. Still John leans upon his bosom, impetuous Peter alternately acknowledges and denies him, and worldly-minded Judas betrays him. Still Pharisaism and priestcraft join hands in crucifying him; and skepticism still seals the tomb in which it strives to hold him.

Nor is this all. The end is not yet. He will come again. While he lived he compared himself to a prince who leaves for a time his province, but returns to resume the throne and sceptre. The promise of that reappearing sustained the apostolic Church in all its weary way. For the fulfillment of that

CHRISTOS REMUNERATOR.

promise we, his disciples, still wait. Never was the word of his first ministry more significant than now: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It needs no John the Baptist to read the signs of the times; no prophet's eye to perceive in the gray dawn of the early morning the token of the second rising on this darkened world of ours of this Sun of Righteousness. The very air is full of the portents of his coming. The very earth trembles in strange convulsions beneath the feet of the Son of man. While wars and rumors of wars prefigure the final trump, and falling thrones and kingdoms prepare for the coronation of him whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whose dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.
Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein;
Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord:
For he cometh—for he cometh to judge the earth:
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the people with his truth.

APPENDIX.

In order to avoid encumbering the pages of this book with voluminous references, I have confined the foot-notes to Scripture references and occasional brief indications of the reasons for the statements in the text on doubtful points. For the convenience of persons who may wish to investigate any of the subjects treated of in this volume, I give here a classified list of some of the more important works which I have consulted. As this volume is intended less for the scholar than for the general reader, I have only given books in the English language, and such as are for the most part easily accessible. For the same reason, I have always referred to English translations of foreign works.

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